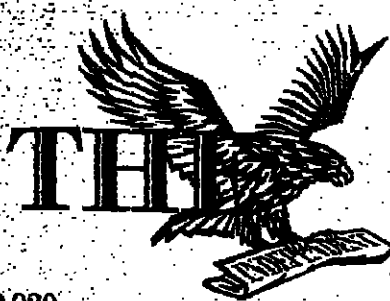


SATURDAY

Gestures that changed the world
From Jarvis to Gazza

Win Damon Hill's Renault Spider

Travolta: a big man is back



THE INDEPENDENT

No 2,980

9 MARCH 1996

50p

£20 off mortgages; high street sales healthy; house prices on an upward trend; jobless total falling; inflation record best for half a century, but...

Where's the feelgood factor?

DIANE COYLE
Economics Editor

Britain's homeowners received a substantial boost as the Chancellor of the Exchequer reduced the cost of borrowing yesterday for the third time in four months. The cut triggered another salvo in the escalating mortgage price war.

Jubilant Tories with an eye on the general election predicted a return of the feelgood factor after the Chancellor cut base rates by a further quarter of 1 per cent, to 6 per cent.

Kenneth Clarke forecast a bumper year for business, insisting that running the economy properly was a key way of rallying public support behind the Conservatives.

His buoyancy underlined the

Government's optimism that the economy will turn out to be an electoral asset, thanks to a tide of helpful figures - a view backed by a Labour peer, the eminent economist Lord Desai.

The housing market has started showing signs of recovery, retail sales are climbing, unemployment is steadily declining and inflation has been lower for longer than at any time since 1948.

Mr Clarke is confident that he will be able to reap the benefits of low inflation and steady growth. But even if the headline numbers continue to be so favourable, which other economists still doubt, they will not necessarily deliver success in the polling booths.

A "feel-a-bit-better" factor, against a background of job

insecurity and high levels of debt, of renewed decline in manufacturing and falling investment, is unlikely to translate into votes in the same way as "feel good" factor.

Yesterday's fall in home loan costs will help a bit. Britain's two biggest lenders, the Halifax and Abbey National, followed by others, swiftly announced mortgage rate cuts that will save borrowers between £7 and £20 a month on an average £50,000 loan.

There are more cuts to come. The Nationwide, which recently undercut most other lenders in order to demonstrate the

benefits of remaining a mutual society, said it would respond with a further reduction. Its 6.99 per cent variable mortgage rate remains below the rate of 7.24 per cent most societies announced yesterday.

Mr Clarke decided to cut base rates again because inflationary pressures have continued to recede. His chance came after the Bank of England said recently that the Government was likely to meet its 2.5 per cent inflation target.

The reduction yesterday morning, after the Chancellor's Thursday afternoon meeting with the Governor of the

Bank of England, Eddie George, looks at odds with recent signs that the housing market and consumer spending were already recovering. However, in a sign of the diverging fortunes of Britain's "dual" economy, the latest figures show manufacturing output in decline, a fall in investment spending by industry and a sharp slowdown in export growth.

Businesses therefore welcomed yesterday's cut in interest rates, with some immediately calling for another, if the economy's slowdown continued. Yet financial markets

were lukewarm about the move. Share prices dived after news of astonishingly strong job creation in the US last month destroyed widespread hopes that American interest rates would fall, helping sustain the downward trend here.

City analysts are divided between those who think the Chancellor will push base rates even lower regardless and those who fear he is engineering an upturn which will force him to increase them later this year.

Interviewed by ITN, Mr Clarke contradicted the economic forecasters who are arguing that interest rates will have to rise again later in the year - a development that could militate against the Government leaving the election to the last possible date of May next year.

The Chancellor insisted: "Consumer spending is going to grow this year because we are going to have more money in their pockets, real money, not money the economy cannot afford. Money that's come because of all the measures that we have taken over the last three or four years."

He is right as far as this goes. But the Government can not expect much credit for narrow successes with some aspects of the economy when voters' lack faith in the wider framework of its policies for jobs and industry.

Here is the dilemma for the Government: good news for the consumer is irrelevant in an atmosphere of industrial decline and job insecurity.

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Poisoned pens
The cut-throat world of the literary biographer page 9

Making waves
The trouble with the River Wye page 13

Travel Writer of the Year
The Independent's Harriet O'Brien wins a major award page 16

What's new
Innovation, aggravation and the Royal College of Art page 9

Ministers to rebel on divorce Bill

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES
Political Correspondent

Three senior ministers are planning to vote against the two key planks in Lord Mackay's divorce reforms, causing serious embarrassment to the Government over the already troubled proposals.

The two issues at the centre of the controversy are the introduction of the "no fault" divorce and a minimum 12-month cooling-off period.

A Government source said John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment, Ann Widdecombe, Minister of State at the Home Office and Michael Ancram, Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, were expected to oppose the Government when so-called "conscience" clauses on the two issues in the Family Law Bill reach the Commons. Such a high-profile protest would boost the opposition campaign, orchestrated by former Cabinet ministers John Redwood and John Patten and a substantial section of the Tory backbench.

All three ministers have strong religious connections. Mr Gummer and Miss Widdecombe both left the Anglican Church to become Roman Catholics over the issue of women priests. Mr Ancram attended Ampleforth College, the Catholic public school, and married a member of the Fitzalan Howard family, headed by the country's leading establishment Catholic, the Duke of Norfolk.

The Bill, with its "no fault" clause and cut in the minimum waiting period for a divorce

from a possible five years to one, is set to begin its Commons stages before Easter. It still has to clear a Tory rebellion at Monday's Lords Third Reading, when Lady Young, the former Conservative minister, will press for a vote to increase the period of "reflection and consideration" from 12 months to 18.

In order to ensure that a coherent Bill emerges from the Commons, the Government is expected to adopt a procedure similar to that used during the 1990 Abortion Bill. That is likely to mean the Second and Third Readings are "whipped" - with Tory MPs being expected to vote with the Government. But free votes on issues of conscience, such as the retention of fault and the waiting time, would be taken on the floor of the House as part of the Bill's Committee Stage.

The device is calculated to enable the Government to get the Bill passed without being forced to rely on Labour during the principal stages. While Government business managers would hope for support throughout of the entire "payroll vote" from ministers and parliamentary private secretaries, the odds are not good.

Lord Mackay, the Lord Chancellor, who introduced the Bill, said yesterday: "I am concerned that any extension in this minimum period for obtaining a divorce may unnecessarily increase the trauma for children involved in the divorce process, for whom a year can seem a very long time." Lord Mackay has come under severe attack from Government colleagues for insisting on bringing in the Bill.



Blooming marvellous: Arthur Ball, from Barnham Nurseries, Newton Abbot, Devon, unwrapping one of his Cymbidium hybrids for the annual orchid show which opens today at the Royal Horticultural Society Hall, Westminster

Sober teens shun rebellion

GLENDIA COOPER

Today's teenagers are unlikely to be storming the barricades and demanding their rights, according to a new survey commissioned by Barnardo's. Instead, they think the legal age for marriage should be raised to 18, see a good education as essential and want to see the death penalty restored.

In one of the most comprehensive surveys ever of young people's attitudes, it emerges that rather than rebelling against their parents, teenagers respect adults' points of view. More than nine out of ten young people believe parents should have a say in what is taught in schools. And six out of ten believe that sex education for under-12s should be at the discretion of their parents.

Three-quarters think that being well-educated is "essential" or "very important". Formal exams are seen as the best way of judging ability by nearly half and 80 per cent feel that publishing exam results of secondary schools is useful for parents.

Even so, 57 per cent worry about getting a job at the end of their education.

Tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime, young people think that reducing poverty would be an effective way of dealing with it, along with more discipline in school and in families.

More than 60 per cent think that the courts should be able to sentence murderers to death.

Even at the younger end of the scale, there is deep suspicion of the fairness of the justice system in Britain today. Given a scenario in which two people appeared in court charged with an offence they did not commit, 44 per cent thought that an Afro-

Caribbean was more likely to be found guilty than someone white and 64 per cent felt that a poor person was more likely to be found guilty than someone rich.

The survey, in which 12 to 19-year-olds were interviewed about race, gender, crime, morality and politics, discovered that they were clearer on what they thought of God than what they thought of politics. While a quarter said that they did not know how they would vote, nearly 60 per cent said they believed in God.

But this generation at least seem more committed to equality than those which went before. They believe in living together before and as an alternative to marriage, and think that a single parent can bring up a child just as well as two.

Saturday story, page 17

Girl, 10, found in squalor with dying father

PETER VICTOR

Social workers left a 10-year-old girl in appalling conditions to care for her dying father, it was claimed yesterday. The child had been struggling to cope in horrendous conditions for weeks before social services acted.

The girl's plight only came to light when she told a children's home worker, Peggy Calder, what was happening when they met at a disco organised to raise funds for the home.

Ms Calder, 46, who works at a children's home in Skegness, Lincolnshire, decided to investigate and was appalled by what

she found. "I went to the house with her and I couldn't believe my eyes - I could have cried," she said. "I have never seen anything like it."

"There was a dead guinea pig and a dead bird in their cages in the kitchen and there were hundreds of maggots in the bottoms of the cages. The house was knee-deep in all manner of things. You needed a gas mask."

"There were hundreds and hundreds of mouse droppings under the sink. She told me they had been having a lot of trouble with mice and she had been trying to trap them in the oven."

It was not until weeks later that the child's 59-year-old father

was eventually admitted to hospital dying of lung cancer. The girl's parents were divorced seven years ago. Her mother, who knew nothing of her daughter's plight, is now re-married and living with her new family in Kent.

Ms Calder said the girl, who had scabies, was starving because her father, who gave up his factory job and was bedridden, was too ill to cook for her. "She told me she was doing her best but had run out of recipe ideas. That is from a 10-year-old. It was heartbreaking."

Ms Calder said she approached social services immediately but heard nothing

from them so over a week later she took matters into her own hands and escorted the child to the Skegness office. "Then they went to the house to offer some help but her father refused because he was scared she would be taken away from him."

"A social worker called later and told me they could do nothing because they couldn't go barging into people's houses where they weren't wanted."

"But they didn't do anything else after that. I went down a third time, but they didn't want to know. I was given an emergency number but I got absolutely nothing from that either." In the end, Ms Calder

phoned the police and arranged for an ambulance for the girl's father.

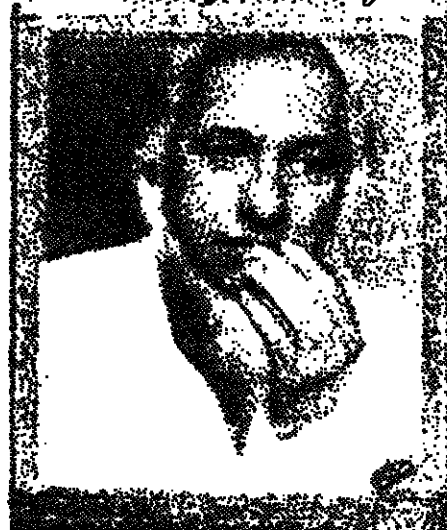
Lincolnshire Social Services area manager, Norman Pitcher, claimed social workers acted quickly to assist the family. "As soon as we were aware of the situation we attended and offered our services but they were refused," he said.

"But we are trying to work with the family as we always do rather than just stepping in and taking over."

The girl is now living at the Derbyshire Children's Home in Skegness and Ms Calder has begun legal proceedings to adopt her.

MARK KNOPFLER

darling pretty



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news

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Why women don't want children



Clarke paves way for clash on referendum

DONALD MACINTYRE

Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, yesterday cleared the way to a Cabinet showdown by showing no signs of giving up his fight to stop the Government promising a referendum before Britain joins a single currency.

The Chancellor's continued stand emerged as the anti-European Union Sir James Goldsmith, whose Referendum Party is posing a threat to the Tories in marginal seats, warned that such a referendum should be on more than a single currency - and should take place before or at the time of the next general election. Sir James also announced that his party would hold a full conference in October.

Mr Clarke said in at least two broadcast interviews yesterday that "nothing had been decided" in yesterday's Cabinet discussion which injected powerful - and now probably irresistible - momentum into the campaign within Government to make an early commitment to a single currency referendum.

Mr Clarke's stand - backed at present by Michael Heseltine,

the Deputy Prime Minister - ensures a tough debate when the Cabinet discusses a Foreign Office paper on the mechanics of a referendum before Easter. But few ministers or senior MPs expect the pro-European Mr Clarke to seek to exercise a "veto" over the decision by threatening to resign in the face of a growing consensus in favour of pledging a referendum.

That view was underlined yesterday when Sir Norman Fowler, an influential former senior Cabinet minister and party chairman, joined the calls for a referendum promise by declaring: "I do not think it is remotely possible for the single currency issue to be settled quietly and privately inside government." Sir Norman is a close friend of both Mr Major and Mr Clarke.

The Cabinet looks increasingly likely to approve a policy - sought by a majority of centrist-right MPs as well as a limited number on the pro-European left - which would oblige the Cabinet to hold a plebiscite after deciding to join a single currency. Speaking after the EU

summit in Madrid in December Mr Major said that "if there were to be a referendum, the time for a referendum would be after the British Cabinet had decided that it wished to recommend going in and it would then seek an endorsement of that in a referendum."

But that still leaves open several questions - which will be addressed in the FCO paper - such as whether all ministers would have to take collective responsibility by campaigning for a single currency, and whether Parliament would be required to approve membership of the European Monetary Union before or after such a referendum.

Sir James, who announced yesterday he had recruited more than 400 candidates to fight the next election, said his party had engaged MORI to do its opinion research, and had 18,500 "active supporters" throughout the country.

He said the promise of a referendum should definitely go ahead and "should allow for a full debate on the sort of Europe of which Britain wanted to be a part."

'Brookside' chief predicts five-night week for soaps

MARIANNE MACDONALD
Media Correspondent

Every major soap opera on television will soon be broadcast five times a week, the creator of *Brookside*, Phil Redmond, predicted yesterday.

The millionaire producer warned that the sheer economics of competition would force the networks to dominate broadcasting with wall-to-wall *Coronation Street*, *EastEnders*, *Brookside* and *Emmerdale*.

Mr Redmond, 40, who owns Mersey Television, which makes *Brookside* and the teen soap *Hollyoaks*, said: "I am quite sure

we will go to five nights. It is a financial decision for Channel 4 to make, but I would be extremely surprised if they did not."

Brookside has experimented with showing five nights a week, most recently last year when it did one-off specials covering the discovery of Trevor's body and the trial of Beth and Mandy. But a Channel 4 spokesman said there were no plans to extend the show. "There are several issues involved. One is the cost. But another is whether you can keep up the quality."

Industry insiders acknowledge the logic of showing the

major soaps every weekday night, but point out that *Coronation Street* had to be cut back from five nights to raise its quality.

Coronation Street announced plans to go four nights a week last year, but with the fourth episode likely to be on Sunday. Alan Yentob, controller of BBC1, has denied plans to extend *EastEnders*. But he added: "One can't be po-faced about this. Clearly those serials are of huge value to the audience."

Both *EastEnders* and *Coronation Street* regularly attract 18 million viewers compared with a core *Brookside* audience of five to six million.



Thorny issues: Tony Blair addresses Labour's Scottish conference yesterday

Photograph: Colin McPherson

Blair warns of 'hard choices'

JOHN RENTOUL

Tony Blair warned the Scottish Labour conference yesterday that "Government is about hard choices", and said he had asked shadow ministers to find spending cuts in order to free resources for Labour's priorities.

"I have asked the Shadow Cabinet to submit to me their written bids spelling out their priorities and their legislative demands. And I tell them, as today I tell you, that some of them will be disappointed," he said.

Only if Labour could show itself capable of making difficult decisions would it deserve to be elected, he said. "Between now and the election we will face up

to those hard choices so that at the election we put to the people what we will actually do. I will not have anything in our manifesto that I do not, hand on heart, believe a Labour government will be able to do."

The Labour leader took on left-wing critics in the party's traditional heartland. Referring to attacks on shadow Chancellor Gordon Brown's welfare-to-work plans, he said: "I rage at their stupidity." He dismissed calls to scrap Trident nuclear weapons as "posturing".

Mr Blair defended his shadow Chancellor's plan to cut benefits for young people who refuse work or training. "These are not the despised skivvy

schemes of the Tories. These are real employment and training opportunities, with proper qualifications written into them. If a government is going to make that its first specific spending pledge... then those young people have an obligation to participate," he said.

A series of critical motions sent to the party's Edinburgh Conference were watered down and votes which might embarrass the leadership were averted yesterday. But not all discontent was suppressed. Maria Fyfe, MP for Glasgow Maryhill, criticised Mr Blair for turning the party into a personal "fan club".

Mr Blair warned his party

against complacency saying: "Though we are well placed, there is a long way to go."

He said the Shadow Cabinet must begin preparations for a smooth transition to government and told the conference: "I have asked colleagues to submit proposals that will make a difference at little or no cost. And I have asked them to look for savings in their own departmental areas so that we can change priorities, too."

He gave the example of the promise to abolish the assisted places scheme, which helps children of lower income families to get private schools, and to put the savings into reducing infant class sizes for all.

Mayhew sacks Ulster police chairman

DAVID MCKITTRICK
Ireland Correspondent

The chairman of the Northern Ireland Police Authority was sacked yesterday following a long-running dispute which has left the body in some disarray.

Differences of opinion on

have combined with personality clashes. Sir Patrick Mayhew, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, sacked the authority chairman, Belfast solicitor and former Alliance Party politician David Cook, at a meeting at Stormont Castle after he refused to resign. A leading member of the authority, journalist

and author Chris Ryder, was similarly sacked.

The infighting and disagreement have dragged on for so long that some resignations or removals from the body that has general oversight over the Royal Ulster Constabulary had come to seem inevitable.

Mr Cook and Mr Ryder are

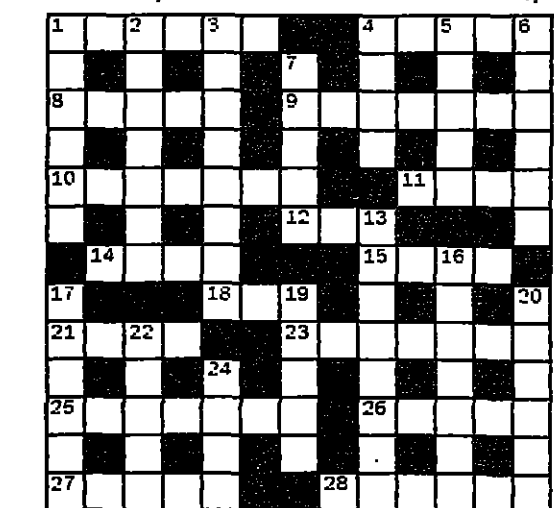
generally perceived as modest reformers. Their approach failed, however, to win over a majority of authority members.

Meanwhile, Unionist politicians were alarmed at reports of proposals such as dropping the flying of the Union flag on police stations and abolishing the oath sworn by constables.

concise crossword

No. 2930 Saturday 9 March

By Poma



ACROSS

- 1 Abrupt (6)
- 4 Leg joints (5)
- 5 Former African republic (5)
- 9 Unlawful (7)
- 10 Resort in Devon (7)
- 11 Defamation (4)
- 12 Overturn (3)
- 14 Examine quickly (4)
- 15 Wild party (4)
- 18 Haul (3)
- 21 Greek letter (4)
- 23 Tubercle (7)
- 25 Affluent (4-3)
- 26 Metal block (5)
- 27 Shine (5)
- 28 Cunning (6)

DOWN

- 1 Holy (6)
- 2 Very energetic (7)
- 3 Persuasive (8)
- 4 Brown seaweed (4)
- 5 Surpass (5)
- 6 Major planet (6)
- 7 Frothy (5)
- 13 Standing (8)
- 16 American State (7)
- 17 Powerful person (6)
- 19 Hard work (5)
- 20 Guard (6)
- 22 Gauzy fabric (5)
- 24 Hollow roar (4)

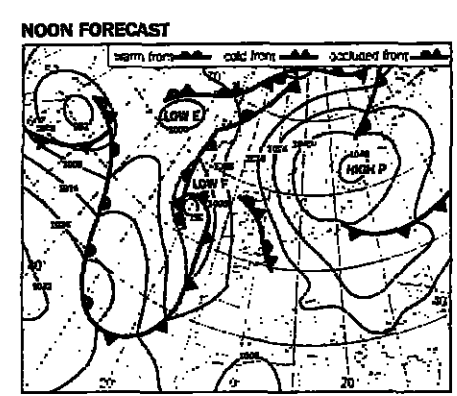
Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

Across: 1 Loads, 4 Tor (Lodestar), 7 Eddy, 8 Bird-time, 9 Semi-detached, 10 Appeal, 13 Dabble, 15 Back of beyond, 19 Clamshell, 20 Nail, 21 See, 22 Hatch, Down: 1 Ladle, 2 Anytime, 3 Sable, 4 Tilt, 5 Remodel, 6 Errand, 11 Pebbles, 12 Loo-fah, 14 Bayonet, In Comic: 17 Beech, 18 Neigh

NOTES

weather

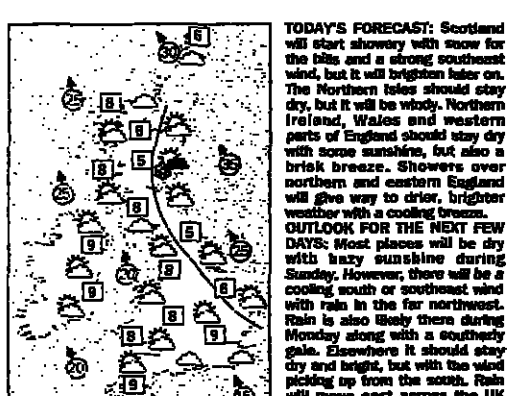
NOON FORECAST



High P is stationary and will maintain its central pressure. Low P is moving northwards.

WORLD WEATHER: (Temperatures in °C; Wind speeds in mph; Cloud cover in %)

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud
London	12	10	50
Bristol	11	10	50
Manchester	10	10	50
Newcastle	11	10	50
Glasgow	10	10	50
Belfast	11	10	50
Edinburgh	10	10	50
Cardiff	11	10	50
Birmingham	12	10	50
Nottingham	11	10	50
Leeds	10	10	50
Sheffield	11	10	50
London	12	10	50
Bristol	11	10	50
Manchester	10	10	50
Newcastle	11	10	50
Glasgow	10	10	50
Belfast	11	10	50
Edinburgh	10	10	50
Cardiff	11	10	50
Birmingham	12	10	50
Nottingham	11	10	50
Leeds	10	10	50
Sheffield	11	10	50



Today's Forecast: Scotland will start showering with snow for the hills and a strong northerly wind, but it will brighten later on. The Northern Isles should stay dry, but it will be windy. Northern Ireland, Wales and western parts of England should stay dry with some sunbursts, but also a brisk breeze. Showers over northern and eastern England will give way to drier, brighter weather with a cooling breeze.

Location	Temp	Wind	Cloud
London	12	10	50
Bristol	11	10	50
Manchester	10	10	50
Newcastle	11	10	50
Glasgow	10	10	50
Belfast	11	10	50
Edinburgh	10	10	50
Cardiff	11	10	50
Birmingham	12	10	50
Nottingham	11	10	50
Leeds	10	10	50
Sheffield	11	10	50

Tories rally to Boothroyd's aid

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES
Political Correspondent

West Bromwich Conservatives are rallying behind their local Labour MP, the Commons Speaker, Betty Boothroyd, who has been the victim of repeated claims by Westminster Tories that she is biased towards the Opposition.

The whispering campaign even included the suggestion that the Conservatives in her constituency ought to breach the convention that they should not put up a candidate against her at the next election. While Ms Boothroyd could be expected to retain the seat, which she held in 1992 with a 7,830 majority, such a move would seriously dent her standing.

The local Conservative Association yesterday insisted that fielding a candidate against her was out of the question. Some senior Tories have gone further and indicated their support for her in her role as Speaker.

Spurred by reports in last Sunday's newspapers, Ms Boothroyd took decisive action this week when she used her regular meeting with Alastair Goodlad, the Government Chief Whip, to demand an end to the allegations of bias.

She is understood to have singled out a group of Tory MPs believed to be at the centre of the campaign, including Alan Duncan, MP for Rutland and parliamentary private secretary to Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party Chairman.

Ms Boothroyd was elected Speaker in April 1992 after securing substantial Conservative support to beat her Tory opponent, Peter Brooke.

Since then, however, some MPs have compared her un-

favourably with her Conservative predecessor, Lord Weatherill. One minister said: "Bernard Weatherill bent over backwards not to help his own side." The minister emphasised, however, that Ms Boothroyd was there "to support the rights of the backbench MP".

The fact also remains that she has never ejected a Conservative backbencher for misbehaviour, but she has evicted the Labour MPs Dale Campbell-Savours and Dennis Skinner.

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

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NatWest

National Westminster Bank announces that with effect from 8 March 1996 its Base Rate is reduced from 6.25% to 6.00% per annum.

All facilities (including regulated consumer credit agreements) with a rate of interest linked to NatWest Base Rate will be varied accordingly.

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مكتبة الامم المتحدة

The feelgood factor: Homeowners staying put as lack of job security blamed for continued property slump

Confidence still fragile in housing market

WILL BENNETT and CLARE GARNER

Alex Centro finds it easier to sell expensive properties in north and west London than he does those at the lower end of the market. Confidence among buyers with modest incomes is still very fragile.

Despite yesterday's cut in the interest rate – the third in the past four months – and last month's 0.5 per cent rise in house prices, many buyers are still too worried about job security to venture into the property market.

Mr Centro, sales manager for Oakleys estate agents, said: "It is not interest rates which are the problem, it is job security. People are not going to commit themselves to a 25-year mortgage when they have only got a job contract for one year."

"Things are improving slowly but surely. The top end of the market is going pretty well and we are looking for more property to sell at that end, while the less highly valued areas are more difficult."

Throughout the economy, the picture is one of a cautious recovery, with people being

choosy about what they buy and both families and businesses very wary of committing themselves to bigger outgoings.

Jonathan Bastable, of Burrough & Company, an estate agents in Newbury, Berkshire, said: "I don't think you can say interest rate cut, therefore improvement in the property market."

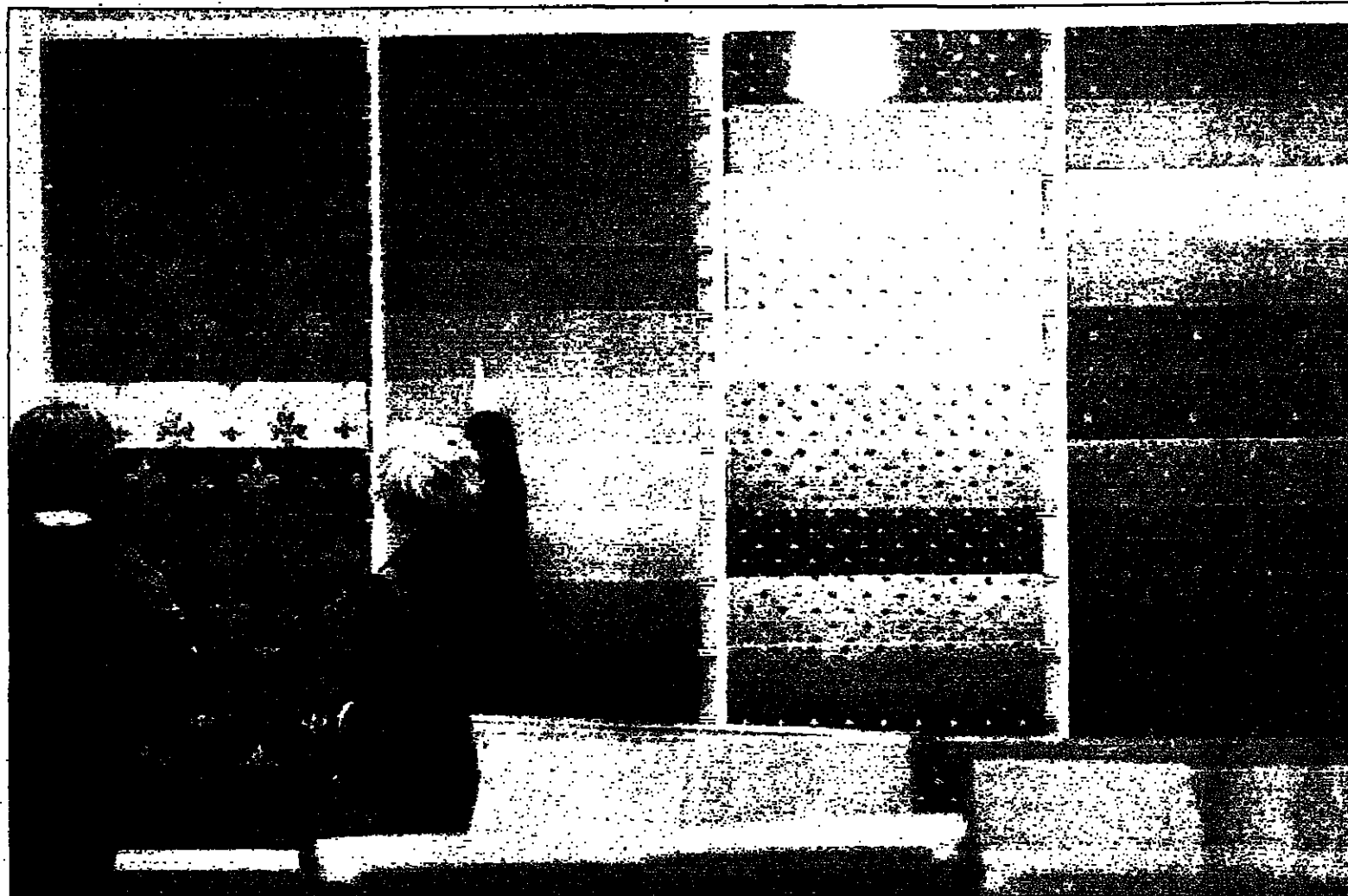
"But it will have a cumulative effect on property values and increase confidence."

"A quarter of 1 per cent off interest rates does not mean a dramatic difference, it is just a continuation of the general improvement in the market that has been going on around Newbury for 18 months to two years now."

A spokesman for Dixons, the electrical goods group, said: "The interest rate cut is not likely to have any immediate effect on sales."

"In the longer term it might stimulate sales if the housing market was to pick up. However, consumers are spending selectively and there is no evidence of a feelgood factor along the lines of that experienced in the 1980s."

The department store chain



Carpet-baggers: Shoppers in Peter Jones, London. Householders are choosing to invest in existing homes, rather than moving. Photograph: John Voos

John Lewis, which sells many household furnishings, reported a 9 per cent increase in sales last year and believes that that confidence is slowly starting to return to the High Street.

Stuart Hampson, the company chairman, said: "The early years of this decade caused

us real pain as the property sector went into decline, but in this third year of profit growth we have felt distinct signs that customers are feeling more confidence and are getting back to investing in their homes."

"What we are seeing now is no repeat of the 1980s but the

property market does seem to be on the move again. Some people are finding it suits them well to take rented houses rather than buying... and more people are able and willing to invest in their existing homes instead of moving."

But the rate cut was greeted

without much enthusiasm by shoppers yesterday. Carolyn Fitter, a teacher and mother of two from Newbury, said: "I suppose it is a move in the right direction but I would think there have got to be more significant moves in the right direction for it to take effect."

Belinda White, a pensioner from Marlborough, Wiltshire, said: "I think it is awful news. I am living on my investments. Our investments go lower and lower and all our bills go up and up."

"Quite honestly, I think the Government ought to go."

Signs of encouragement for optimistic Chancellor

Consumer spending has grown more slowly during the 1990s than at any time since before the First World War. Even during the depression of the 1930s there were years when people could increase their spending at a faster rate than they had during this "feel-good" decade.

Chancellor Kenneth Clarke faces an uphill struggle to restore some feelgood to the economy before the general election. But there are signs of an improving housing market, whose collapse made a profound contribution to Britain's loss of economic morale.

There is growing evidence that the three reductions in the level of base rates since December combined with the mortgage price war have started to help the housing market recover. The rise in house prices last month was the biggest for

two years and the seventh in succession, the Halifax building society reported this week. For the first time since the beginning of 1995, house prices were higher than they had been a year earlier. This followed reports of an increasing house sales and higher mortgage borrowing.

Up to a million and a half people remain trapped by negative equity thanks to the drop in house prices since the 1989 peak. But experts estimate that it would not take a big increase in prices to whittle these numbers away. Prices rising at an annual rate of 3-4 per cent would almost eliminate negative equity within two years.

Gary Marshall, chief economist at the Halifax, expected exactly this sort of steady recovery. "The housing market will not be like the 1980s but it will get on to a more even keel. A more stable economy makes for a more stable housing market," he said. But he adds that the psychological scars of the market's collapse will be only gradually erased.

There are those who believe Britain is poised for another boom. David Miles, Professor of Finance at Imperial College, London, argued: "The pent-up demand will be released as soon as people become convinced that we have gone past the bottom. There is a reasonable chance of a very powerful upswing in house prices."

However, it would come too late to help the Chancellor. "We could see a very strong 1997 and 1998," Prof Miles said. "Like the building society windfalls, it

will happen the other side of the election."

Share handouts from building societies – which will total about £1.5bn by the end of 1997 – are one reason most economists join Mr Clarke in predicting an increase in consumer spending. Consumers are also expected to spend some of the proceeds from maturing Tescos, estimated at around £45bn this year and next. The rebate on electricity bills and income tax cuts that take effect in April will be the icing on the cake.

There are already signs that spending is picking up. Official figures showed that retail sales volumes dipped in January, but trends are leading upwards. A CBI survey this week revealed firm sales on the high street in February, alongside a surge in optimism among retailers.

Most forecasts for 1996 pre-

dict that there will be enough of an increase in spending compared with last year to offset weakness in exports and investment, which were disappointing in late 1995. Although few are as optimistic as the Chancellor, most think the economy can grow at about its long run trend rate – or Mr Clarke's "sustainable rate".

Leo Doyle, an economist at City investment bank Kleinwort Benson, cautions that the

improvement in spending looks good only by comparison with earlier weakness. "Cautious spending of windfalls does not make people feel good in the same way as solid increases in their incomes," he said. "Job insecurity will make it hard to engineer a return of the feel-good factor."

The financial markets feel that further reductions in the cost of borrowing would involve running risks with inflation, so

the Government may not be able to engineer a feelgood factor before the election. "If people feel good, Kenneth Clarke will have gone too far," said Geoffrey Dicks, a City economist at NatWest Markets. "It takes 20 per cent growth in house prices and huge increases in consumer spending to make us happy. If you have that kind of party there is always a hangover."

Diane Coyle

It's never been easier to borrow

CLIFFORD GERMAN
Personal Finance Editor

The steady downward pressure on interest rates has cut borrowing rates to their lowest levels in a quarter of a century. The main lenders have cut standard variable rates to 7.24 per cent, but borrowers can easily pick up loans at rates well below that.

Bradford & Bingley Direct, who offer mortgages over the phone, are already down to a standard variable rate of 6.25 per cent with no hidden extras to good credit risks. Scarborough Building Society is offering fixed-rate loans at 0.25 per cent for a year, and the Portman Building Society chipped in yesterday by offering fixed rates

What you save with the new rate			
Mortgage	Old rate 7.49%	New rate 7.25%	Difference
£30,000	£202.44	£198.61	£3.83
£40,000	£270.70	£265.34	£5.36
£50,000	£345.40	£338.46	£6.94
£60,000	£420.09	£411.59	£8.50
£70,000	£494.78	£484.72	£10.06
£80,000	£569.48	£557.94	£11.54
£90,000	£644.17	£630.97	£13.20
£100,000	£718.86	£704.10	£14.76

Figures for 25-year repayment mortgage. Source: Halifax BS

of just 4.99 per cent until May 1998.

Cheap mortgages are good news for home-owners, but as base rates fall savers have seen their income from traditional savings halved in less than two

years. The Halifax were already offering savers just 2.75 per cent before tax on small sums of £500 in instant access deposits.

Investors willing to give 60 to 90 days notice to withdraw

money could expect only 3.25 to 3.40 per cent on sums of £1,000 before yesterday, and savings rates seem certain to fall by around 0.25 per cent in the next few weeks.

Savers who have taken out new Tax-Exempt Savings Accounts in recent weeks are also in for a shock. The best interest rates on fixed-rate Tescos are as high as 7.25 per cent, but most of these offers will be withdrawn within the next seven days.

Investors can still get 6 per cent tax-free by investing in Personal Equity Plans (PEPs) and up to 10 per cent tax-free in Corporate Bond PEPs, but there has to be a possibility that capital values on these investments can go down as well as up.

End of the road: AC Cobra and Renault Five to cease production

Driving off into the sunset...

PETER VICTOR and MARY DEJEVSKY

Two motoring legends – the historic AC Car company and the Gallic Renault Five – were consigned to history yesterday.

The much-loved French runabout, which inspired a generation of hatchback cars, ceases production this summer after 24 years as the company's best seller. Surrey-based AC Cars, founded in 1901 and one of Britain's oldest car companies, will disappear into receivership. Accountants Price Waterhouse said it had been appointed administrative receivers to AC Cars and its parent company Autokraft Ltd.

AC Cars is based on the site of the former Brooklands race circuit near Weybridge in Surrey and has about 90 staff. It currently makes the £36,000 AC Ace.

A link-up with Texan millionaire Carroll Shelby led to the



Brute power: AC Cobra



Design item: Renault Five

creation of the first race-bred Cobra in the early 1960s.

It was widely regarded by enthusiasts as the ultimate "muscle car"; its hooded snake badge the last word in macho motoring. According to legend, grown men screamed when exposed for the first time to its brute power and fierce acceleration.

So keen are enthusiasts to own the legendary car that several kit car manufacturers make replicas of the Cobra retailing at up to £40,000.

Current AC boss Brian Angliss took over the business in 1986. A year later, car giant

Ford took a 50.9% stake in the company. The partnership proved an uneasy one and eventually Mr Angliss was allowed to buy out Ford's share.

By October 1993, AC Cars was able to show off the Ace car, having already produced the Cobra Mark IV. But cash difficulties have now arisen and the company needs to team up with a financially-secure partner.

Mike Gercke, one of the receivers said yesterday: "Production is continuing while the receivers seek buyers for the business as a going concern. No one has been laid off and we are

confident that a strong partner can be found for the company."

By comparison the end of the Renault Five will inspire bitter-sweet memories rather than fanaticism. A last series of Fives, a limited run of 12,000 – named the "Bye-bye" – will be the model's swan-song.

More than 9 million Fives have been sold since production began in 1972. It came into its own with the oil crisis, subsequently acquiring the sleeker, more stylish lines that facilitated its graduation into "le Car" and the "Supercin", a design item of the Eighties.

Renault says the car is being phased out because it is outdated and no longer commercial. Since the replacement – the Twingo, darling of the Paris smart set – will not be sold here, British fans of the Five will have to be satisfied with the "Bye-bye". The name has annoyed the French so much that there may be enough to go round.

Saddam Hussein has Fide chess men in cheque

WILLIAM HARTSTON
Chess Correspondent

After a year of negotiations and speculation, the International Chess Federation (Fide) has found a sponsor for its world-championship match between Anatoly Karpov and Gata Kamsky. It will be in Baghdad, with President Saddam Hussein guaranteeing a \$2m (£1.3m) prize fund and performing the opening ceremony when the battle begins in June.

It brings new hope of recognition to a regime shattered by years of war, starved of international investment through its own internal conflicts and the unpredictable decisions of its autocratic leadership. Iraq has had problems too, but over recent years has been relatively peaceful compared with the world of chess.

Fide's problems came to a head in 1993 when Garry Kasparov and Nigel Short broke away to found the Professional Chess Association (PCA) and take their world title match away from Fide. This resulted in two rival championship contests, with Anatoly Karpov winning the Fide crown, while Kasparov took the PCA version. Both organisations found it increasingly difficult to attract and maintain sponsorship: Fide lacked the strongest player in the world, while the PCA lacked the official sanction of the world governing body.

In 1994, Fide's president, Florencio Campomanes, was re-elected on a platform promising to reunify the titles. A year later, however, he had neither delivered a peace treaty nor found an organiser for the Karpov-Kamsky world-title match.

In January, Campomanes was replaced by Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, 33, the millionaire President of Kalmykiya, an oil-rich republic within Russia. He has taken some extraordinary decisions, the most controversial of which, before the Baghdad bombshell, was to replace the three-year world championship cycle and gladiatorial title matches with a single annual knock-out tournament lasting a couple of weeks.

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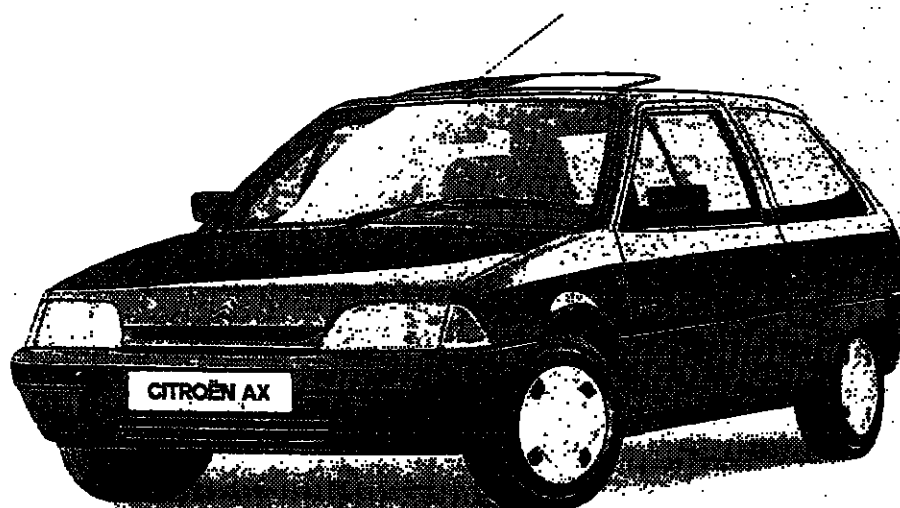
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Since then, however, some MPs have compared her un-

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Down to Earth: Rogue satellite will crash from the skies at midday on 12 March (give or take 18 hours), says amateur expert

Retired teacher solves Chinese space puzzle

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science Correspondent

A rogue Chinese satellite is expected to crash to Earth early next week, and some of the best people in the field are tracking its unpredictable downward spiral. They include the US Space Command, the European Space Agency (ESA), the UK Defence Research Agency and Geoffrey Perry, of course.

Judging by his track record, Mr Perry – a retired physics teacher now living in Cornwall – probably has the most accurate prediction for the satellite's eventual landing time. "Midday on the 12th of March [Tuesday], plus or minus 18 hours," he told *The Independent* yesterday. By contrast, ESA's latest official estimate is 4am on the 12th – plus or minus 24 hours.

Mr Perry's relies on long experience and superior techniques. He observes satellites at dusk, sitting in his garden with binoculars and a stopwatch, and listens in to their radio bleeps from his home. Explaining his latest forecast, he said: "I get US radar data which is collected by Fylingdales. I take

the last six sets of data, fit a parabola to them, calculate the rate of decay, correct for the semi-annual variation, and add that to the date. Perfectly straightforward."

Mr Perry's experience pre-dates the ESA, and spans more than 30 years. For much of that time, he taught at Kettering Grammar School for Boys where he found the dawning of the space age provided a means of fascinating pupils – and of scooping the rest of the world.

In 1966, using £25 worth of radio equipment, he and his pupils noticed that some of the newly launched Soviet satellites had a different orbit from others. From that, they deduced that the Soviets were using a new launch site – a fact the USSR would only admit to publicly twenty years later.

In December 1973 they tracked the successful landing of Soyuz-13 and issued their data, which was precise and correct, to the world an hour before the Soviets. "Things like that fire kids' imaginations," he recalled yesterday at his home in Bude. "I remember one of them saying, 'It beats pouring iron filings over a magnet, or

putting hot rivets into a calorimeter."

The grammar school has since closed, but Mr Perry, now 68, has managed to keep alive the principle of the "Kettering Group" – as it became known. A worldwide network of amateur observers have been in touch for years, swapping information by telephone, fax and now e-mail.

His inspirational methods also run in the family. His daughter is now the head of physics at Malvern Girls' School – encouraging pupils to follow the satellite's downward path.



Star gazer: Geoffrey Perry uses scientific data, and a good old-fashioned pair of binoculars, to monitor the satellite from his home in Cornwall

Danger in the sunny skies

Britain has received more harmful ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation this week than nature intended, thanks to man-made damage to the high altitude ozone layer.

The ozone, a gas made of three oxygen atoms, forms a protective shield against the UVB streaming towards the Earth in the Sun's rays. We know that high levels of UVB cause non-melanoma skin cancers and there is solid evidence UVB radiation can damage wild plants, crop plants and plankton in the sea – all of them at the base of food chains.

So is mankind's damage to the tenuous ozone layer, caused by chlorofluorocarbons and other industrial compounds, actually allowing more UVB to reach the Earth's surface? And what harm is being done?

The answer to the first question is yes, but there is no clear answer to the second, so far. Fortunately, the worst ozone destruction seen to date takes place in places and at a time of the year when it is least likely to do damage – in the springs of both the southern and northern hemispheres and in the unpopulated polar regions.

Nonetheless, University of California scientists have reported that in the Antarctic ozone hole, UVB pouring through its ozone hole knocks back the plankton. Ozone-depleted air has also drifted over the populated tip of South America.

Nicholas Schoon reports on the threat caused by the record holes in the ozone layer

Marked ozone depletion takes place over the Arctic, too, allowing more UVB to reach populated zones such as Scandinavia, Alaska and northern Russia and Canada – and, over the past few days – Britain.

But, from a human point of view, winter is the best time for this to happen. The Sun is low in the sky, it is often cloudy, people spend most of their time indoors and when they do go out they are usually wrapped up. People get exposed to much more UVB in summer, irrespective of ozone damage.

But scientists, including Colin Driscoll, head of the optical radiation group at the Government's National Radiological Protection Board, say that ozone depletion is a real concern. Any pollution which changes the global atmosphere letting through harmful radiation has to be taken seriously.

The ozone layer should begin to repair itself around 2000, thanks to international treaties curbing CFCs and other chemicals. But it will not be until the middle of the next century when the Antarctic ozone holes, the largest to date, disappear.

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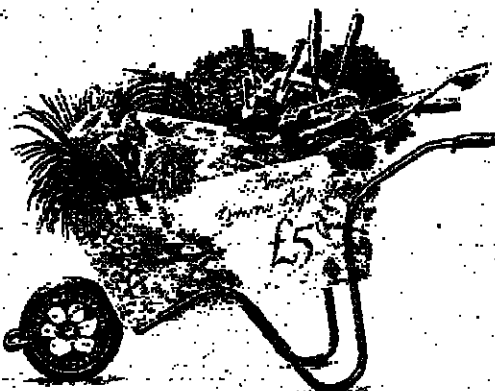
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news

Pigeon pilferer lights on pie in the sky

Vanishing birds: Gastronomic theory behind mystery raider's clean-up of Trafalgar Square

PAUL FIELD

They carry diseases including meningitis and gastro-enteritis and, with the exception of those in the royal parks, are classified as pests. So some would say the pigeon snatcher, who has swiped around 1,000 of the world famous birds from Trafalgar Square, is public spirited and should be applauded.

The culprit, who is white, in his twenties and wears blue overalls and a red baseball cap, has for the past month, up to three times a week, raided the London landmark. On the last two raids, including last Tuesday, he had an accomplice.

Bernie Rayner, a licensed seed seller, watched in astonishment as the man used food to lure the pigeons towards a box on which he was sitting. His escape route was via Charing Cross Tube station. "There are around 4,000 pigeons here," he said. "I reckon a quarter of them have gone in the last few weeks."

"I challenged him and he claimed he was a member of a pigeon racing club in Peckham and they were for competition. But they are too old and out of condition for racing."

Police and officials from the Heritage Department, which is responsible for Trafalgar Square, told the snatcher he could face prosecution under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. He could not be arrested because pinching pigeons is not theft - there are no constraints on their flight paths.

However, the man laughed off the warnings and a Scotland Yard source admitted it was unlikely that legal action could be brought. Roy Riggs, the officer who confronted the pilferer,

said: "There is a strong suspicion these pigeons are ending up in pies rather than in races. They are probably being sold to Greek restaurants as they are some sort of delicacy out there."

But the theory of the pie man cometh seems to have little credence. Michael Frangos, owner of Beotys restaurant in Covent Garden, raised doubts. "The Greeks and Cypriots do love pigeons as well as partridges, pheasants and thrushes but they are cooked over charcoal with lemon juice, never put into pies. Few Greek restaurants here would serve pigeon."

Keith Floyd, the television chef, said: "Pigeons are notoriously tough so I would take the trouble and money to order imported pigeons. They need to be plump, well rounded with a smooth skin."

The feathered inhabitants of Trafalgar Square, on the other hand, are plump, but oddly shaped with a rough skin, often covered in their own excrement. If eaten, even when cooked in a sauce with a well glazed crust, they are likely to make people very ill.

Westminster council warns people not to feed them because of the health risks. Three years ago the council tried putting pigeons on the pill by lacing food with contraceptives. However, the Heritage Department, which spends £100,000 a year cleaning Trafalgar Square, refused to be drawn on whether the snatcher was doing the site a favour. Spokesman Flavie Higgins said: "They do create a lot of mess but we consider them to be a tourist attraction. It would not be Trafalgar Square without them."



Bird drain: A pigeon rests on a statue in Trafalgar Square where a mystery man has snatched 1,000 birds in a month. Photograph: Lynn Ferguson

Skye bridge toll is 'lawful'

The controversial tolls for crossing the Skye bridge are lawful, a court ruled yesterday.

Sheriff James Fraser rejected the argument of protesters charged with alleged non-payment of the £4.30 toll as some 70 protesters packed the day courtroom in Dingwall, Highland, to hear his ruling on legal arguments against the charge.

The group, led by a pipe and carrying banners and waving flags, had marched to the courthouse through the town.

Neil Murray QC, for the 180 people facing charges of non-payment of the £4.30 toll, had earlier argued that the charge was incompetent under several statutory rules. He claimed the New Roads and Streets Act 1991, under which the tolls were charged, was contrary to the 1707 Treaty of Union and also argued that the Secretary of State for Scotland was acting beyond his powers in introducing the toll order in 1992.

Sheriff Fraser ruled in favour of the Crown in test cases against three of the accused, and refused the defence immediate right to appeal.

Following a short adjournment the court then read the names of all 184 accused, with the majority maintaining their not guilty pleas. The trial of the first, George Anderson, will take place on 11 April.

Breeders get the bird

The lucrative business of ostrich farming came out of the farmyard yesterday when one breeder started a High Court action, accusing another of copying its methods.

The Ostrich Breeding Corporation and Ostrich Farming Corporation, set up in 1986, are suing the Ostrich Breeding Company, which began trading 18 months ago.

Robin Higgins, spokesman for the two corporations, based in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, said the company, which is based in Swansea, was mimicking their offers and publicity.

Ostrich meat - with the taste of fillet steak and less fat than fish - is being hailed as the dish of the future. Supporters claim it will be as cheap and plentiful as turkey within 10 years.

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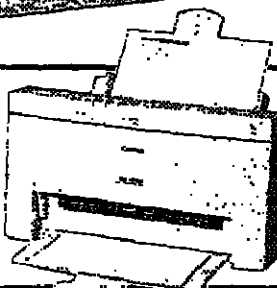
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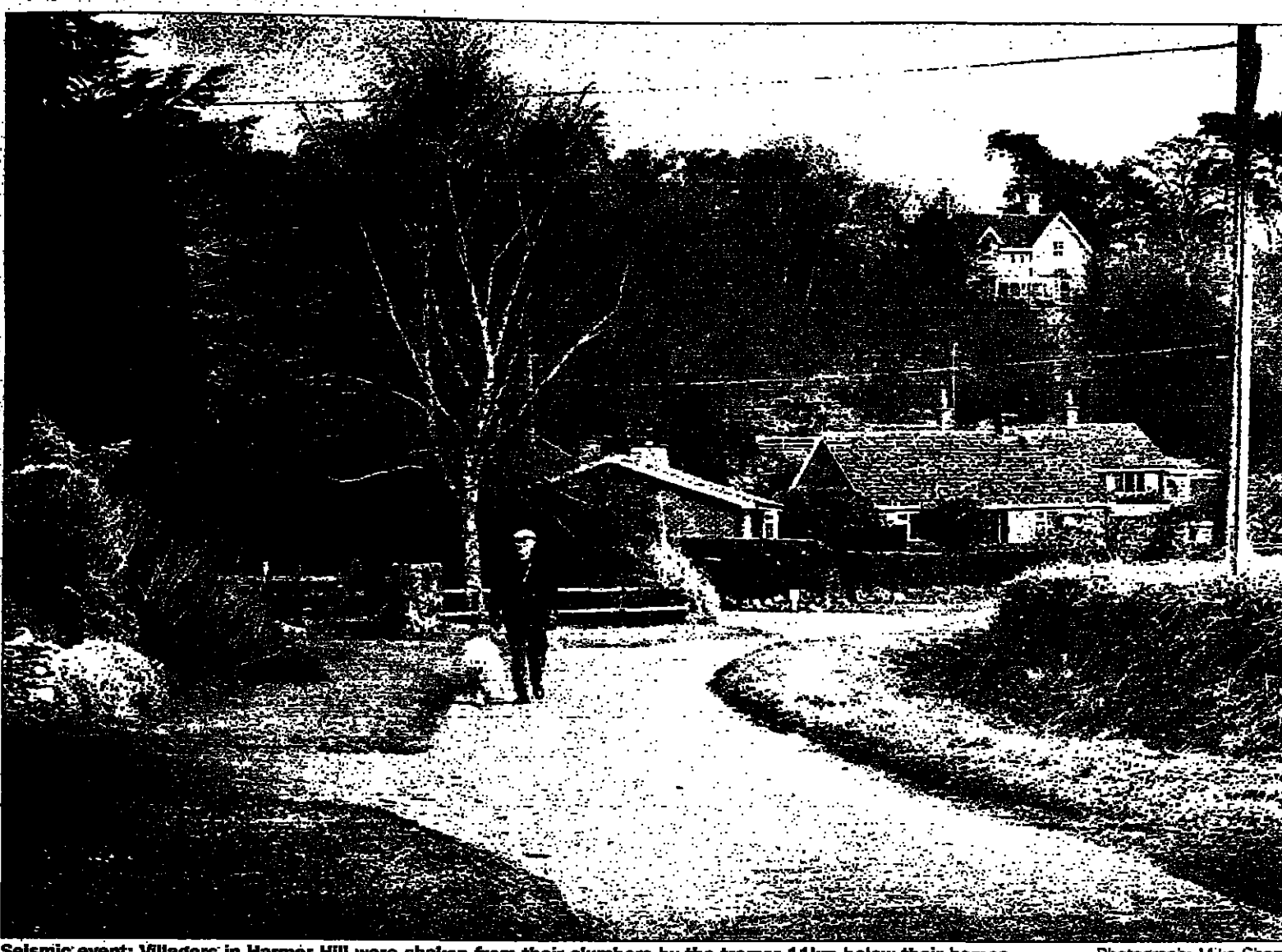
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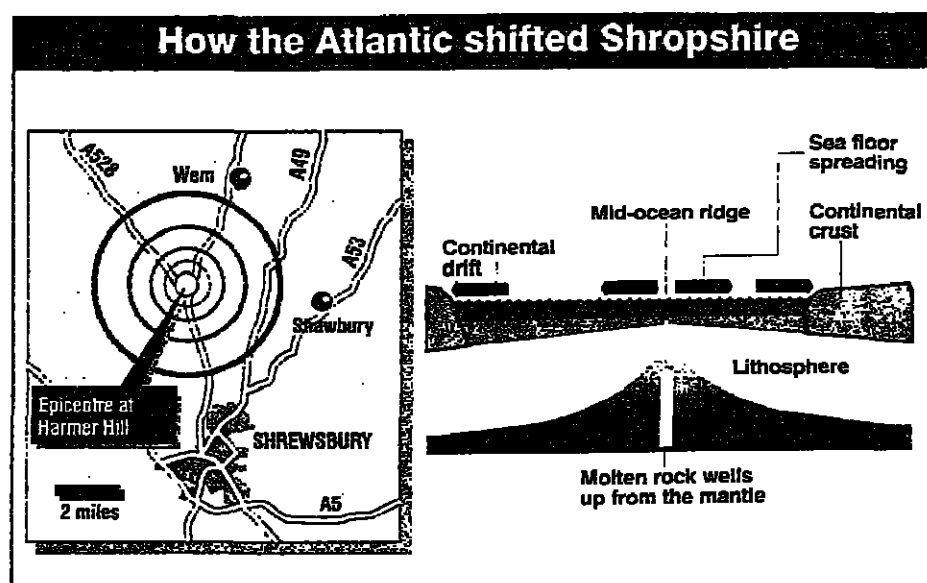
دور الازم

Continents in collision: Shropshire village at the epicentre of earthquake as tectonic plates push Britain closer to Europe



Seismic event: Villagers in Harmer Hill were shaken from their slumbers by the tremor 11km below their homes

Photograph: Mike Sharp



The Earth moves in Harmer Hill

TOM WILKIE
Science Editor

Eleven kilometres below the village of Harmer Hill, just north of Shrewsbury, the earth moved for the people of Shropshire at 11.41pm on Wednesday night.

The tremor, which measured 3.4 on the Richter scale, lasted for a couple of minutes and brought some worried residents

out of their homes and into the street in their nightclothes. But the energy released at the surface was so slight that, at worst, a few roof tiles may have tumbled and perhaps some cracks appeared in walls.

With a reluctance that must have gratified the local Eurosceptic MP Nicholas Budgen, the bowels of the Salopian earth were squeaking in protest as Britain is being physically forced away from North America into the arms of Europe.

Down the middle of the Atlantic ocean runs a ridge, which is spreading apart the two continents. The ridge is pushing the Atlantic floor away from the North American continent and creating new crust, pushing Britain away.

Because of this geological rather than political pro-European movement, "Britain is under stress all the time" according to Dr David Booth, a seismologist with the British Geological Survey's Global Seismology Group in Edinburgh.

Most large earthquakes take place around the boundaries of the tectonic plates which make up the earth's crust. The notorious San Andreas fault in California, for example, represents the grinding collision between the Pacific Plate and the North American Plate.

Although Britain is some distance from any plate boundaries, the effect of the ocean mid-floor spreading can be felt as far away as Shropshire. "Due to our very spectacular geological history, there are a number of weak points within the crust," Dr Booth said.

But the Shropshire tremor was "most unlikely to be the harbinger of a large destructive earthquake in that area". We are not going to lose Shrewsbury, he said, although there may be minor aftershocks.

He pointed out that although, geologically, Britain "has settled down over the past few million years, there is still plenty of geological activity". The result is that there are "20

to 30 felt-events a year" - British earthquakes strong enough for people - rather than just delicate seismometers - to feel.

The Shropshire tremor, the largest in Britain for a year, follows quickly on the heels of the two biggest earthquakes in Britain this century - both of which were also in the same general area. The biggest British earthquake this century was centred on the Llyn Peninsula in north Wales in July 1984. It was even deeper than this week's event, about 20 kilometres down, and registered 5.4 on the Richter scale.

In April 1990, the area was once again the epicentre of a sizeable, deep quake as a 20-second tremor, centred on Bishop's Castle, measured 5.1. Buildings across the West Midlands and the Black Country were evacuated and chimneys toppled.

All three tremors were so deep that seismologists cannot identify the local faults in the earth's crust that gave rise to them, and they are not linked to any features - such as hills or valleys - on the surface, according to Dr Booth.

But in a telling demonstration of current public anxiety, police 999 switchboards were jammed by people who feared they were victims of an IRA bomb attack.

Tremors that shook Britain

- St Andrews, Fire, 811: earthquake said to have killed 1,400 people.
- Colchester, 1884: most damaging known quake, which killed four people, damaged 1,200 homes and flattened a church.
- North Wales, 1984: epicentre of the biggest quake in Britain this century, measuring 5.4 on the Richter Scale.
- Wrexham, 1992: epicentre of 20-second tremor which measured 5.2. It caused buildings across the West Midlands and Black Country to be evacuated, toppled chimneys and caused structural damage.

Electronic cash 'purse' scheme

CHARLES ARTHUR
Science Correspondent

have them operating in Britain next year.

The new system would be a direct challenge to the Mondex electronic cash scheme, which has been tested in a public pilot scheme in Swindon. Visa confirmed it was talking to banks about introducing "electronic purses" to the high street.

Retailers warned that the new system would have to be both cheap and cause the minimum of disruption. But the news was seen as a welcome boost by those in the "electronic cash" industry, which has been gaining momentum in the past few years.

The "purses" would consist of a microchip embedded in a credit card-sized mount, known as a "stored value card". These store money in the form of encrypted electronic digits in the chip's memory, and can be used like cash to make purchases. The transaction is completed by swiping them through a card-reader in a store, which transfers the "cash" to the store's computer.

Visa is understood to be talking to Barclays, Lloyds, the Halifax, Abbey National and a number of other high street banks. "Six members of the Visa consortium in the UK have asked to evaluate a stored value card programme," said a Visa spokesman yesterday.

"It's early days, but if they give the go-ahead we could

have them operating in Britain next year.

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Banished children get help to find parents

ALAN MURDOCH
Dublin

The Irish Government has promised more than 2,000 people sent as children to new homes in the US between 1948 and 1962 help in contacting their natural parents. Extensive files in the National Archive giving details of their past were discovered this week.

The children, many born outside marriage or to parents too poor to support them, were sent at ages ranging from 12 months to seven years old for adoption by US families. But many later found their birth certificates were false and they were unable to trace their natural parents.

Following initial revelations the Irish Foreign Minister Dick Spring ordered a search for any surviving records of the children's adoptions. Many were sent abroad by homes run by religious or public bodies. Some

distraught mothers only discovered their babies had been sent abroad when they arrived to visit them in orphanages.

The archive records show an average of 110 children a year were "exported" over 14 years. They include names and dates of birth of the children, and details of both their natural and adoptive parents.

Each file contained a declaration by the mother, confirming the child was born out of wedlock, and undertaking "never to attempt to see, interfere with, or make any claim" to the child in future.

In a speech at a convent school in Waterford, Mr Spring said: "One can only imagine the pain that must have been involved in signing many of those declarations."

He said the files exposed the different values of the time. He added: "They [the adoptive parents] had to supply a letter

from their own doctor confirming in his opinion that they were unable to have children of their own and that they were 'not deliberately shirking natural parenthood'."

The news has been welcomed by some of the adoptees. Maggie Butler, who has spent years searching for her mother, yesterday spoke of her elation at having "an important part of my life and that of 1300 other people acknowledged by the country where we were born".

The archives could now allow her mother the choice of whether to meet her. "My goal is to find her. My heart's desire is to meet her," she said.

The child care agency Barnados confirmed this week it had been contacted by more than 200 such US-reared adults seeking their original families.

Nora Gibbons, a spokeswoman for Barnados, stressed it was important to reassure

birth mothers that the archive information would not be made "indiscriminately available". Counselling was necessary and third-party mediation was needed for contacts between mothers and adopted children.

Barnados called for a search of government departments for files on other children sent abroad via other schemes.

Mr Spring said he was seeking further information from the Irish Passport Office, which had earlier indicated that passport photos of the departing infants, in some cases the natural mother's only reminder of her child, had been destroyed.

Referring to the recent controversy over Chinese orphanages, Mr Spring said "it is perhaps too easy for us to have strong views about the way in which children are treated abroad, and to assume that we have no questions to answer... here at home."



Slice of life: One of Alexander Fleming's first laboratory samples of penicillin mould, originally given to one of his assistants, which is expected to raise more than £10,000 at auction at Sotheby's. Photograph: Lynn Ferguson

Plan to extend protection for buried treasure

STEPHEN GOODWIN

Findings of ancient coins and other gold and silver artefacts will no longer be subject to the curious anomalies of the medieval law of Treasure Trove under a Bill given an unopposed Second Reading in the Commons yesterday.

In 1994-95, 27 finds were considered by the special committee which fixes the value of treasure. The largest valuation was £52,600 for 88 12th-century coins from King Stephen's reign, found by a metal detectorist at Box, Wiltshire.

But, as the Commons heard as it debated a Treasure Bill introduced by backbencher Sir Anthony Grant, the present common law, dating from the era of Richard the Lionheart, is "riddled with anomalies".

Until comparatively recent times, Treasure Trove was not seen as part of the nation's heritage but as a lucky boost to the monarch's coffers. Today it is part of the hereditary revenues of the Crown surrendered in return for the Civil List money.

Objects made of gold or silver found in the ground have to be reported to the local coroner. If they are declared Treasure Trove, museums are given a chance to acquire the objects and the finder is paid the open market value.

In the case of Britain's most expensive find, the Hoxne

Hoard, discovered in Suffolk in 1992, the Treasure Trove Reviewing Committee sought four estimates to help it decide on a market value of £1.75m. The 15,000 Roman gold and silver coins and jewellery went to the British Museum.

However, an object can only be declared Treasure Trove if it has been deliberately buried with the intention of recovery. As Mark Fisher, a Labour heritage spokesman, put it: "It is ridiculous to expect a coroner's court in 1996 to be able to say whether Etichred the Unready actually intended to put a pot with 10 gold coins into the earth or not."

The Bill will remove this anomaly and widen the types of treasure to all coin hoards of whatever composition, except for groups of fewer than 10 base-metal coins, and to all other objects with a minimum precious metal content of 5 per cent. Both coins and objects must be at least 300 years old. Failure to report a find to the coroner within 14 days could result in a fine of up to £5,000 or up to three months in jail.

Sir Anthony, Conservative MP for Cambridgeshire South West, said the current law was a "medieval lottery" and had resulted in important finds being lost to the nation.

Enjoying government support, the Bill is fairly certain to reach the statute book.

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Magdi Yacoub: operation

World first as woman gets lung from living donors

LIZ HUNT
Health Editor

A cystic fibrosis sufferer has scored a double first by becoming the first patient in Britain to undergo a lung transplant from a living donor – her father – and the first in the world to receive from a living donor – a family friend – who is unrelated to her.

The Cystic Fibrosis Trust yesterday welcomed the pio-

neering surgery, saying it offered new hope to scores of sufferers whose chances of survival are limited by the shortage of lungs for transplant from dead donors. Up to 40 per cent of cystic fibrosis patients die on the waiting list.

Clare Wildman, 20, who needed oxygen 24 hours a day, can now breathe almost normally after receiving lung tissue from her father, Graham, 43, and Jude Harris, 40, a close

friend of her mother's. They each donated about a fifth of their lung tissue, comprising the lower left lobe of Mr Wildman's lung and the lower right of Mrs Harris's.

The six-hour operation, performed at Harefield Hospital in Middlesex by Professor Sir Magdi Yacoub, the world famous transplant surgeon, took place July last. He agreed to carry it out only after approval from independent ethical committees

at Harefield, and the Royal Brompton Hospital, and from the Department of Health.

The idea for the operation came from Ms Wildman's mother, Averil, who read about the success of similar ventures in America where about 20 such operations have been carried out. She intended to be a donor along with her husband, but her lung tissue was not a good match with her daughter's.

Other close family members were tested for compatibility with Ms Wildman, but were not considered suitable either. Her 16-year-old brother, Stephen, volunteered but the Wildmans thought he was too young.

Mrs Harris and her husband, from Hertfordshire, then offered themselves as donors as Ms Wildman's health deteriorated. Mrs Harris was the better match. "I didn't want Clare to die. I have two healthy daughters and I've known her

mother for 30 years, since we were nine years old. It is like we are related." Ms Wildman is now planning to go to college.

Professor Yacoub said the operation was possible because everyone has spare lung capacity, and because donated lung tissue will expand to fill the cavity. He told the *Daily Express*:

"As doctors we are trained to treat patients and it goes against the grain to operate on somebody who is normal ... But we

cannot overrule members of the community if they want something so much, so long as they understand the implications ..."

Dr Martin Scott from the Cystic Fibrosis Trust said yesterday: "The ability to use living donors for some CF patients is a major surgical advance and should help reduce the dreadful odds against survival."

Live donors are routinely used in kidney and liver transplants.

Idyll under threat: Dorrell intervenes to stop removal of village's red pillar and post box

Flying the flag earns scorn of social workers

CHRIS BLACKHURST
Westminster Correspondent

The Union Flag fluttering in the breeze, a shop, a red phone box and an old-fashioned pillar box. These may evoke a cosy image of rural Britain, along with cricket on the village green, but for one group of social services inspectors they were too much.

A handicapped centre in Cumbria, which had created this idyll for its residents, to make them feel secure and part of an often unfriendly country, was advised to remove these harmless symbols of village life. There was more. Down too, should come the names chosen by the centre for the bungalows in its grounds – names like Peace, Love, Trust and Hope, deliberately chosen to make the residents feel secure and wanted.

The ensuing row between Barrow & District Spastic & Handicapped Society, which runs The Croft home in Barrow-in-Furness, and Cumbria Social Services, was part of a wider dispute which went all the way to Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health.

When Mr Dorrell intervened, in the words of Dennis Rose, the handicapped society chairman, there was "a dramatic change in the attitude" of the social workers. All the items which social services found unacceptable were dropped,

namely, wrote Mr Rose in a letter to Peter Thurnham MP, whose son, Stephen, attends The Croft: "Flagpole, telephone kiosk, letter-box and names on bungalows."

Two years ago, The Croft became the first handicapped centre in Britain to create "a village" for its 23 adult residents. Instead of them living in one building, the Society built four separate six-bedroomed bungalows in the grounds, to give them a sense of liberty. "At last they could live independently and have a sense of freedom while being in carefully nursed surroundings," said Mr Rose.

To create a village atmosphere, a flagpole was installed in the middle, with a pay-phone in a proper red box and a post box. A kiosk selling sweets, crisps and soft drinks was built, together with a communal meeting-cum-snooker room and TV lounge. The bungalows were given their innocuous names and the meeting room was named after Mr Rose's late wife, Teresa, who had herself been a driving force behind The Croft. Paid for by voluntary funds, it cost £850,000.

Late last year, social services paid an unannounced visit, said Mr Rose, and declared they "did not like the names, did not like the phone box, did not like the post box, did not like the flagpole and did not like the club house being named after my wife."

It was, said Mr Rose, "bureaucracy gone mad". The flag was a particularly sore point since he had served in the Second World War. "I am proud of the Union Flag and I wanted it flying proudly in the village – not least because it helps to acquaint people with learning difficulties about their flag and their country."

There was nothing sinister about the names for the bungalows, either. "Peace, Love, Trust and Hope are four very important words for handicapped people," said Mr Rose.

Jean Bradshaw, head of Quality Assurance for Cumbria Social Services, said their objections centred on The Croft's philosophy. "Our concern is that people should be encouraged to be integrated into the local community as much as possible."

"In any setting we want people to be integrated. Our worry is that people weren't given the opportunity to join in normal facilities," said Mrs Bradshaw. It was better that the residents used the local phone and post box rather than those in their "village".

She admitted that Mr Dorrell was involved in "some discussions" but denied he forced a change of heart. In a joint statement last night, Cumbria Social Services and Mr Rose said any problems between them had been "resolved very amicably".



Sandy shore: Country and western fans at Llandudno, Gwynedd, where over 1,000 devotees are expected for the 2nd North Wales Country Music Festival this weekend at the North Wales Theatre

Photograph: Steve Peake

Paper accused over trial report

A judge has reported the *Daily Mail* to the Attorney General for possible contempt of court after a trial had to be aborted as the jury was due to retire to consider a verdict.

The newspaper had published a report on the morning of the fourth day of the Old Bailey trial of Stephen King, who was accused of recklessly starting a fire on the property of his ex-girlfriend's family. The report included details which the jury had not been told and which, both prosecution and defence counsel agreed, could have prejudiced its verdict.

The paper apologised to the judge, Recorder James Chadwin, for the error. But the judge decided yesterday to refer the matter to the Attorney General. "There has been here, it is conceded, a degree of negligence – possibly characterised as incompetence – but certainly falling below the reporting standards that those who sit in this court have come to accept from the press," he said. The consequences were "enormous and disastrous".

King had admitted setting fire to furniture near his ex-girlfriend Germa Jones's home in Kingswood, Surrey, but had denied the more serious charge that he started the fire while being reckless to whether life would be endangered.

He was formally found not guilty of that charge after the jury was discharged yesterday. The prosecution had considered asking for a re-trial but decided against it because Miss Jones and her father felt unable to go through with another trial.

King, 25, a DJ from Sutton, Surrey, has also admitted damaging property and displaying a pornographic picture of Miss Jones in public. He is due to be sentenced at the end of this month and faces a jail term.

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international

Hardline clerics fail to find a niche in Iran's exclusive poll

ROBERT FISK
Tehran

On the Karaj expressway, the 20ft high posters yesterday urged Iranians to vote as an Islamic duty. "For the greatness of Islam, the continuation of reconstruction and the building of Iran," ran the legend beneath. "It's the first time I've seen the word Iran without 'Islamic Republic' printed in front of it," one of our taxi's passengers announced. "Do you think this means something?"

It's that kind of election. The Council of Experts have vetted more than 3,000 candidates for their Islamic credentials, small parties have thrown in their hand before the poll and the two large groups contesting the parliamentary election have so much in common that several of their candidates have a foot in both camps. "You must know more about this election than we do," Mohamed Ali Sayyas said yesterday at the Vanak polling station in north Tehran. If only we did.

But the poll, for all its shortcomings, in Western eyes at least, will probably decide next year's president. If the "Association of Militant Clergy" gains a majority, Ali-Akbar Nateq-Nouri, at present the Speaker of Parliament, will succeed Hashemi Rafsanjani as President of Iran. If the "Servants of Reconstruction" gain more seats, then either Vice-President Hassan Habibi or the Mayor of Tehran, Gholamreza Khatbaschi, will take office.

Yet the most fascinating aspect is that the real left-wing

clergy, who have always espoused the export of an Islamic revolution and played a role creating the Lebanese Hizbollah and other groups, are totally cut off from the political process. Mehdi Kharoubi and Hojatolislam Ali Akbar Mohtashemi, whom the West love to hate, have no role, since their Islamic "credentials" were found wanting during the last parliamentary elections.

So at the moment when the US is urging the world to isolate Iran as a bastion of "international terrorism", the men supposedly responsible for the unhappy state of affairs are so isolated that former allies would yesterday not even furnish the *Independent* with their telephone numbers. American journalists trying to follow up US-Israeli accusations of "terrorism" against Iran are thus finding little proof of it amid Iran's very exclusive election.

For the truth is that both the "Reconstructors" and the "Servants" are right-wing conservatives. The former may be more liberal on the Islamic dress code on women and the use of satellite dishes and the latter prefer a more Saudi-style code of conduct. But they both number the bazaaris - the free-enterprise bourgeois who originally funded Khomeini's Islamic revolution - among their ranks.

The cry for world revolution and the domestically more important calls for social justice and the alleviation of poverty, which were previously the preserve of Mr Mohtashemi and his colleagues, have virtually dis-

appeared from the parliamentary agenda save for the tiny "House of Workers of the Islamic Republic of Iran", whose leader, Ali-Reza Mahjoub, has campaigned for a programme of Blair-like modesty, state control and careful privatisation at the same time. Other figures have had a harder time.

Ibrahim Yazdi, for example, tried to hold a press conference this week to advertise his "Liberation Party of Iran". No sooner had the liberal intellectual received approval for the meeting from the Ministry of Islamic Guidance than armed Interior Ministry troops turned up at his office, confiscated the video-cassettes of all foreign film crews and advised journalists to leave. They did. And Dr Yazdi pulled out of the election.

Nor could anyone claim to have witnessed election fever on the streets of Tehran. Two central city voting stations I called at were empty at mid-morning.

Iranian Armenians, who must elect two Armenians for parliament out of three candidates, were queuing to vote at their own church-school polling station. But at Vanak only 500 people had turned up by early afternoon. Outside the Friday prayers ceremony at Tehran university, an old man from Tabriz whose nephew was killed at Khorramshahr in the first Gulf war - he had brought the body home from the battlefield in his own ambulance - expressed a desire for no change. "We are happy with what we have," he said. The real question is: if there is change, will anyone notice?



Past master: An Iranian voting in Tehran yesterday as Ayatollah Khomeini, the late Islamic revolutionary leader, looks on. Photograph: Reuters

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Taiwan in dollar panic as Peking starts tests

TERESA POOLE
Peking

Taiwan's people rushed to convert their money into US dollars yesterday, and braced themselves for further missile tests by China into the sea off the island's two main ports. But there was also relief that the mainland's first three test launches had not strayed into Taiwanese territory.

The Defence Ministry in Taipei said that three surface-to-surface M-9 missiles had landed in the sea early in the morning, coming down inside the two target "box" zones previously announced by Peking. They were the first to be unleashed during the exercises, which will continue until next Friday. Two missiles landed about 48 miles west of the southern port of Kaohsiung, and the other near the north-eastern port of Keelung where the target area extends to just 20 miles from the coast. The missiles were not carrying live warheads and had not flown over the island.

In Peking, the leadership stepped up the invective against Taiwan's President, Lee Teng-hui, the front-runner in the island's first democratic presidential elections on 23 March. Since Mr Lee's visit to the United States last June, the mainland has accused him of seeking independence for Taiwan. The Chinese President, Jiang Zemin, last night warned: "Our struggle will not stop for a single day so long as Taiwan authorities do not cease activities to split the motherland for a single day."

Mr Lee has said reunification remained the "ultimate goal" but that the time was "not right" while a Communist government remained in power on the mainland. China's Foreign Minister, Qian Qichen, said: "The Taiwan compatriots don't have to panic over the pending military exercises by the People's Liberation Army. What they should really worry about is that the 'independence' seekers, with support from some international forces bent on splitting China, continue on their wrong path. That will be a real disaster."

Peking's military exercises are aimed at reducing voter support for Mr Lee, with China's leaders apparently ignoring the possibility that their strategy might have the opposite effect.

Throughout the day, Taiwan's ports resolutely remained open but radio stations broadcast repeated warnings to fishermen to stay away from the target zones. Amid a growing siege mentality, many banks were running out of US dollar notes, and were restricting purchases to \$2,000 (£1,300) as people queued to transfer money into a safer currency. The Bank

of America said it would fly in more notes on Monday to meet the shortage. Shops saw brisk sales of rice and staple foods.

The Taiwan government tried hard to calm people's nerves, and lambasted the mainland for its "crude threats". The Defence Minister, Chiang Chung-ling, said the island would "fight" if there were an attack which violated its territorial waters. "But the 12-nautical-mile does not represent our bottom line," he added.

Government support for the stock market meant it actually gained more than 1 per cent yesterday. The central bank, which has the world's second largest foreign reserves, said it would continue to bolster the local currency. President Lee appealed for calm, and continued his election campaigning.

China conducted two series of missile tests last year, following Mr Lee's US visit in June, but the present exercises are taking place much closer to Taiwan's coastline. There has been widespread concern that a misfired missile could land in



Lee Teng-hui: Tests aimed at denting his support

Taiwanese waters, or even on the island, triggering retaliation by Taiwan and a full-blown military conflict.

International condemnation was swift. In the most pointed gesture, Tokyo said it had sent a patrol boat to the area to secure the safety of navigation. The Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto said Peking's policy towards Taiwan was taking an "unfortunate direction".

The US said the tests were "provocative and reckless". In Washington, a State Department spokesman warned of unspecified "consequences" if the missiles went off course. The Defence Secretary, William Perry, said he and other White House officials protested strongly to Lin Hsiang-shan, foreign affairs director of China's state council.

"I believe the message we communicated was very clear and straightforward," Mr Perry said. He added that the aircraft carrier *Independence* was about 200 miles north-east of Taiwan and a cruiser and destroyer were nearby.

Summit shows 'solidarity' with Mid-East peace

RUPERT CORNWELL
Washington

The US wants next Wednesday's hastily arranged Middle East summit to produce "concrete measures" to counter terrorism and promote security across the region.

The Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, said yesterday the conference, in the Egyptian resort of Sharm-el-Sheikh on the Red Sea, would be co-chaired by President Bill Clinton and his Egyptian counterpart, Hosni Mubarak. Among those attending will be King Hussein of Jordan, the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, President Boris Yeltsin of Russia and the leaders or senior representatives of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, and of the European Union - among them Jacques Chirac, the French President.

First suggested by Israel and Jordan in the wake of the recent suicide bombings in Israel, the idea of a conference was instantly seized upon by Washington, where Mr Christopher and senior aides have worked night and day this week to iron out the details. The aim, said the Secretary of State, was to create a "firebreak" against the march of events in the Middle East. Washington was standing "shoulder-to-shoulder with Israel and other peace-makers in the region," to stop terrorism destroying the peace process. "Concrete steps," he predicted, would come out of the meeting.

But it was not clear whether Syria, which has given at least moral support to Hamas and other anti-Israeli terrorist

groups, had even been invited to Sharm-el-Sheikh. Though Syrian officials yesterday again denied the country was a haven for terrorists, Damascus has yet to issue a direct condemnation of the bombings, and last week Israel broke off bilateral discussions here on a separate peace with Syria.

Experts said that with Syria absent, the chances of major practical moves against the terrorists were small, and unlikely to go much beyond the logistical help already sent to Israel by the US, and its pressure on neighbouring states to redouble their efforts to stamp out Hamas and other extremist groups.

But however slender the tangible results, the summit's symbolic importance is huge, as a show of support for the peace process, a ringing gesture of solidarity with Israel from former Arab foes, and a demonstration to Hamas that the terrorist group is isolated in the region.

The next day, as Mr Christopher begins a longer Middle East tour of his own, Mr Clinton will travel to Israel to underline his own sympathy with the horror, grief and outrage of the Jewish state at the four bombings in the last two weeks, which have claimed 61 lives.

White House officials hope too that the physical presence of a US President in Israel will give a boost to the staggering Labour government of Shimon Peres, facing possible defeat in May's general election at the hands of Benjamin Netanyahu, whose Likud party will have little truck with the peace process.

There are also domestic imperatives for Mr Clinton. With

the collapse of the IRA ceasefire, and now the bombings in Israel, two peace-making efforts that were among his biggest foreign policy achievements are tottering - just as the Presidential campaign heats up.

Beirut - Lebanon's pro-Iranian Hizbollah yesterday slammed the summit. Reuter reports. Hizbollah said the meeting would be "a practice of arrogant American hegemony over our region and a consecration of Israeli control over it". The organisation added that its guerrilla war to oust Israeli forces from south Lebanon and suicide attacks by Palestinian groups in Israel were justified as they "target an enemy occupying the homeland".



A woman mourns among the remains of the demolished West Bank home of Rayid Shamoli, said by the Israelis to have suicide-bombed a bus in Jerusalem on Sunday

international

UK holds out for Iran links

SARAH HELM
Palermo

Britain will today urge its European partners to reject American calls to sever diplomatic links with Iran over the latest Middle East violence, risking a US-European diplomatic rift.

Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, will warn EU foreign ministers, meeting in Palermo, against the risks of isolating Iran. A prime concern for Britain is the need to maintain ties with Tehran to pursue efforts to lift the fatwa against Salman Rushdie. While expressing concern over evidence that Tehran may be supporting Hamas, the group which perpetrated the latest bloodshed, Mr Rifkind will say there is no evidence of its direct financial or military support.

Refusal by the EU to end so-called "critical dialogue", a low-level form of diplomatic contact established between the EU and Iran, launched in 1992, would anger Washington, which is determined to find some new

response to Islamic militancy, and support Israel. The Israelis have long argued that Hamas is nurtured by Iran. Hamas leaders do not dispute their political allegiance to Iran but clear evidence that the movement is directly financed or armed by Iran has been hard to come by.

Critical dialogue is the only communication available to Britain to put diplomatic pressure on Iran to lift the death threat against Mr Rushdie. The fatwa, issued in 1989 after the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, provoked Britain to cut diplomatic ties with Iran.

However, at the Edinburgh summit in 1992, it persuaded its EU partners to launch critical dialogue, which involves contacts between EU diplomats and Iranian officials in Tehran, dialogue, and occasional higher-level contacts.

Although the discussions have not brought real progress on the Rushdie question, the Foreign Office continues to argue that dialogue is a better course than isolation.

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SARAJEVO DAYS

Battle fatigue sets in on the home front

They say that moving house is one of the most stressful experiences one can have - and I can confirm that it far outstrips living in a war zone.

In the four traumatic weeks since our landlord announced his intention to move back into his Sarajevo home (two bedrooms, office, sitting room with view of Serb trenches, kitchen, bathroom with running water most of the time, and garage) my household has wallowed in nostalgic memories of siege, shells and snipers. Life was so much simpler then.

For him it's just an attempt to escape the hideous reality of house-hunting in competition with hordes of foreigners arriving to rebuild Bosnia, refugees returning home and all the veteran correspondents, aid workers and political advisers being booted from the (cheap) places we had snapped up during the war.

It happened one night: my flat-mate, Stacy, who works for *Newsweek*, called on the last day of my holiday to announce our impending eviction. We railed and raged: how dare the landlord want to move back into his own house in this callous way? Never mind, I said. I know the number of an estate agent who apparently finds houses immediately and then charges the landlord. It will be fine: now we can get a bigger house so that the various *Newsweek* correspondents and photographers who come through can have a spare bedroom rather than the sofa. This could be a blessing in disguise, I said.

Thirty-odd houses later, I'm in the new place, admiring the scarlet and orange shagpile carpeting the kitchen door, the electric-blue pile on the upstairs floor, thanking God that Stacy went on holiday this morning: she will need to gather her strength before facing the giant photographic *trompe l'oeil* (a woodland scene in autumn) decorating the stairwell. Even retro fashion hasn't become this Seventies yet. And the worst of it is we are only planning to spend two months here - it was a last resort to avoid imminent homelessness.

We had found the perfect flat (three bedrooms and an office, multiple balconies, white walls, wood floors, gracious living, no view of sniper nests, just in case, two garages) 24 hours before our eviction date. The sitting tenant had even agreed to

share with us for March and then move across the hall to a second, smaller flat. We were ecstatic for, oh, several minutes. Until a friend phoned to say that he was now being evicted from the smaller flat so that we could have the bigger place.

We decided there had been enough ethnic cleansing already, and that adding one cross American and his Canadian flat-mate would be a Bad Thing.

The trouble here, when whining about house-hunting, is that all too many locals have had really stressful experiences: the new landlord's family in eastern Bosnia, for example. Dozens of relatives were expelled from their homes when the Serbs took Zvornik in 1992; they now live as refugees in Austria and Sweden.

And one cousin who fled to Srebrenica that summer was caught by the Bosnian Serbs and machine-gunned in a huge group; he felt his father fall dead, then pulled his wife down with him. There the couple lay among the corpses. A soldier walked up and shot his wife in the head but he survived, playing dead. Once the soldiers had gone, he found a few other survivors and walked through enemy territory to safety. At least our rent money will fund a trip to see the son and daughter who fled the siege in 1994.

And the landlords - he's a Muslim, she's a Croat, very Sarajevo - are so nice that we should be able to cope with the inevitable, Yugoslav flaws that affect even the perfect flat: landlords in this part of the world believe that ownership gives them the right to wander in at will, every day or so, to check on the place. The lawyer renting the perfect flat on behalf of its owner, a Serb who moved to Belgrade, adopts this policy with zeal.

Still, he surely could not be as bad as my friend Chris's landlady in Zagreb: she used to pop in to do her ironing, cooking or washing every day. Eventually he cracked, and called her English-speaking son to try to resolve the issue. "I need to talk to you about the flat," Chris began in a purposeful tone. "Fine," replied the son. "I was planning to come by for a show-cr tonight after basketball so we'll chat then."

Emma Daly

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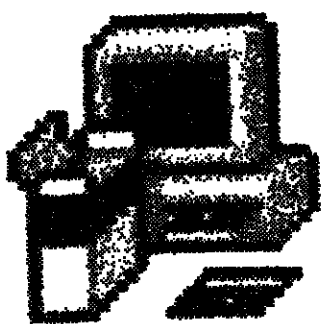


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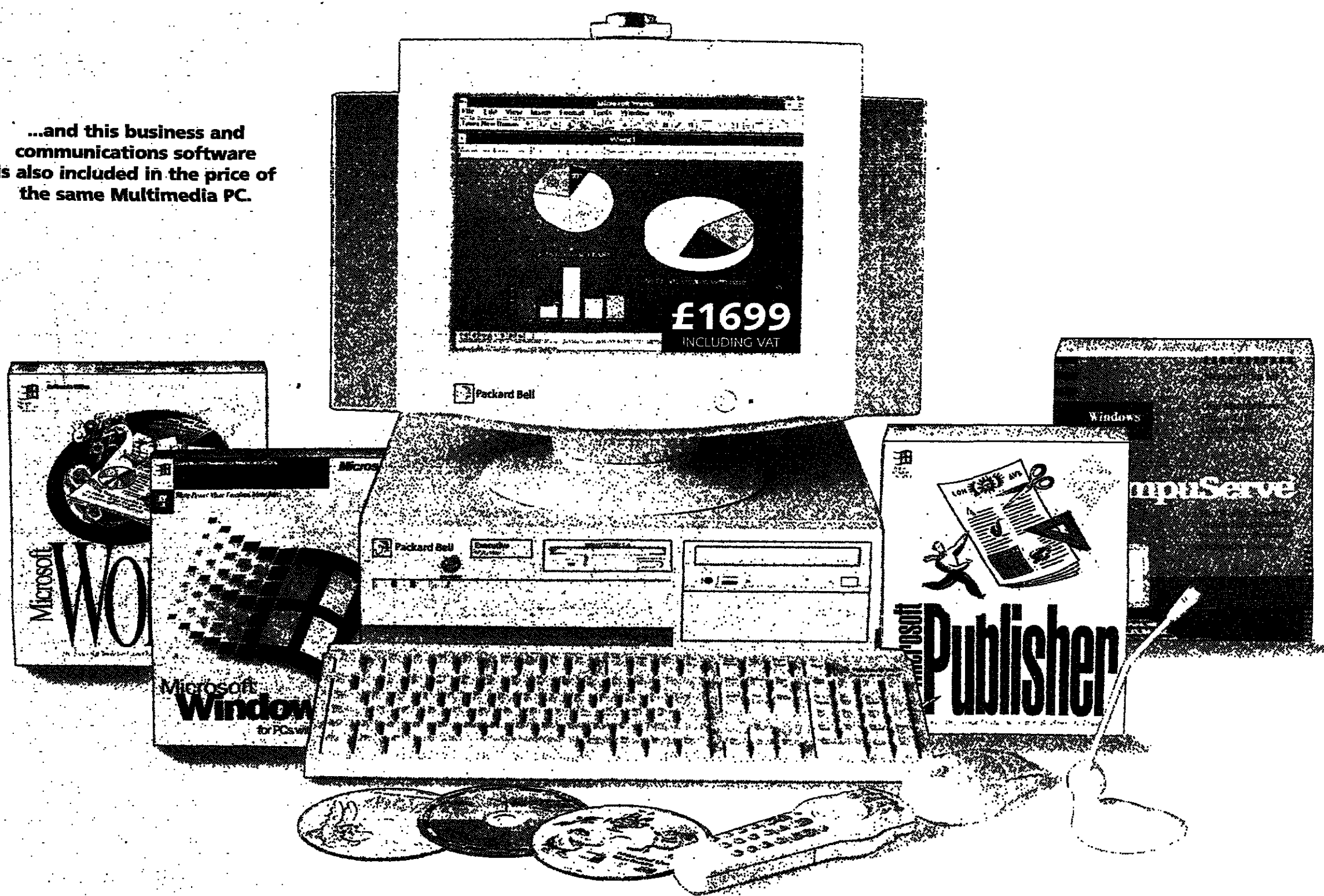
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Chechens win publicity battle with Moscow

PHIL REEVES
Moscow

Chechen rebels began melting back into their mountain hideouts last night after an all-out assault on Grozny which was evidently meant as a message to the Kremlin that it will not end the war in the republic without negotiating with them.

Fierce fighting continued in the city yesterday, but some reports indicated the Chechens were gradually withdrawing after a three-day battle in which they seized a third of the capital, suffered many scores of casualties, but secured a sizeable publicity coup.

Russia's Interior Ministry - keen to imply that it has emerged victorious from the fray - said that the situation was "under control", as federal troops began "search and destroy" missions to flush out the remaining pockets of Chechen fighters holed up in the city.

As they did so, Anatoly Kulikov, the Interior Minister - who co-commanded Russia's disastrous bombardment at Pervomayskoye - touched down at Grozny airport, where he held talks with the head of the Moscow-backed regional government, Dokku Zavgayev. The Chechen assault began at dawn

on Wednesday, the eve of a meeting of President Boris Yeltsin's Security Council to discuss ways of settling the 15-month conflict, which he has vowed to end before the presidential election in June. The timing strongly suggests it was an attempt to steal the thunder from Mr Yeltsin, who left the meeting claiming to have a framework for a settlement, but without revealing details.

The President, although vague, did indicate that the Russian forces will continue to fight the rebels and their leader, Dzhokhar Dudayev, with whom he has ruled out negotiations. The attack by the Chechens, who demand independence from Russia, appears to have been an effort to show that there can be no enduring settlement which excludes them.

Comment on Chechnya in Moscow was muted yesterday, as it was a holiday, but the latest flare-up has already been seized upon by Mr Yeltsin's political opponents, who are well aware of the mood of public anger and frustration engendered by the war.

This sentiment is hardly surprising, given the disasters suffered by the Russians in the past six months. They have seen huge sums of money earmarked

for a small Caucasus republic that most of the country cares little about, while millions of ethnic Russians wait for months for pay or pensions.

They have witnessed their army, including their once-prized special forces, being humiliated at Pervomayskoye by a band of 250 hostage-taking rebels, many of whom managed to escape, despite almost blanket bombing.

In addition, the former military commander in Chechnya, Lt-Gen Anatoly Romanov, is still in a coma, the victim of a bomb attack in October.

And they have seen young Russian soldiers dying daily. All this from a group of rebels under a former Soviet air force officer turned clan leader - Mr Dudayev - representing a minority of Chechens, whom many link with crime.

Mr Yeltsin will be acutely aware that this is probably not the last he will hear from Chechnya, a war that he now concedes was a mistake, before the election. Although he is doing his best to convince voters he has a workable solution to the conflict, most analysts doubt it. What they do not doubt, though, is that the rebels will go on doing their best to oust him from the Kremlin.

Estonia backs Chechens

TONY BARBER
Europe Editor

Estonia's difficult relations with Russia grew even more tense yesterday after Moscow denounced Estonia's punishment for expressing sorrow at the reported death of a Chechen guerrilla commander. The commander, Salman Raduyev, organised a hostage-taking raid last January on the southern Russian town of Kizlyar and is said to have died in this week's clashes in Chechnya.

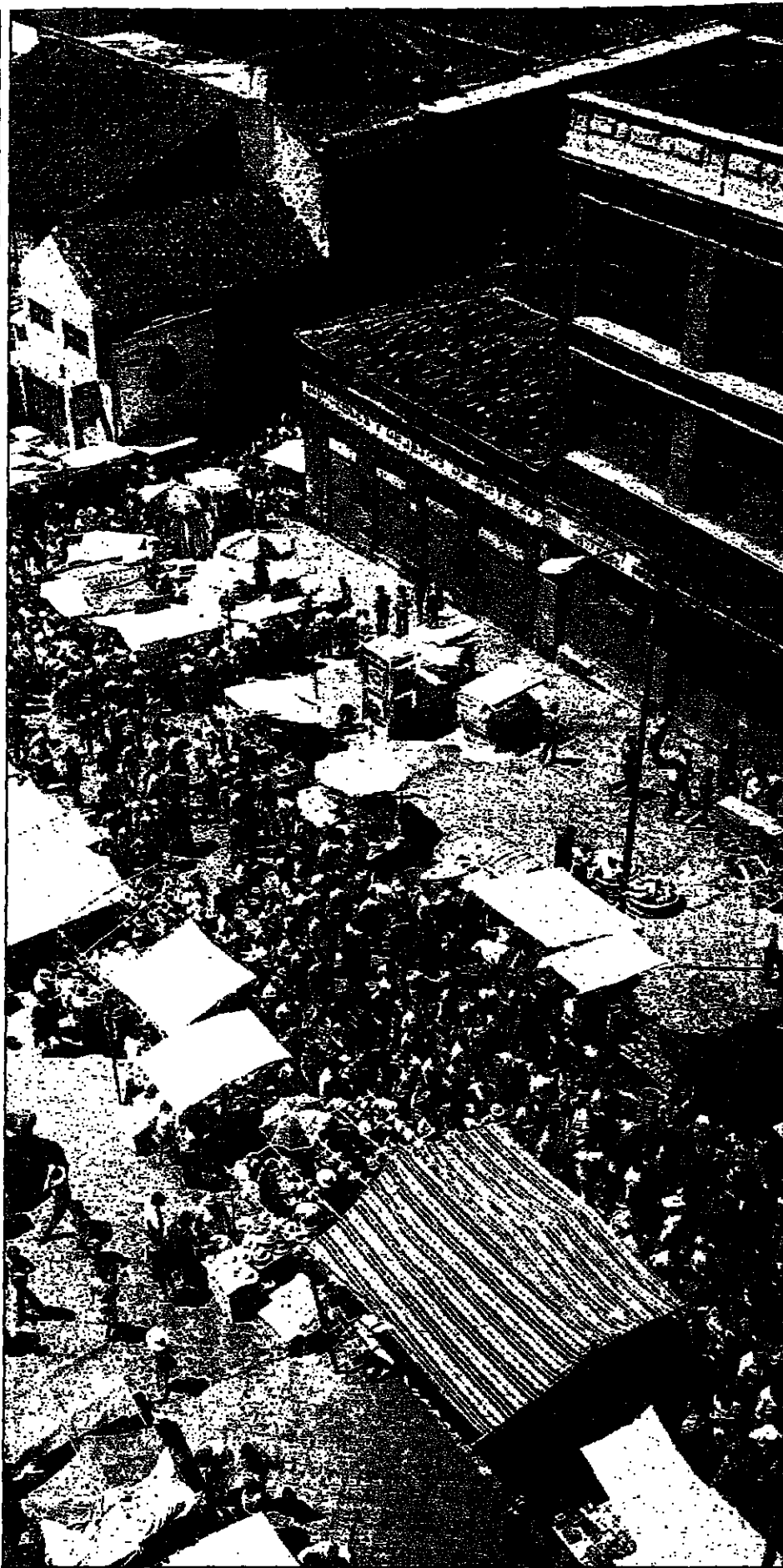
More than 60 of Estonia's 101 members of parliament sent a message of condolence to the

Chechen leader, Dzhokhar Dudayev, whose fight for independence is viewed with sympathy in Estonia. Mr Dudayev once commanded a Soviet air base in Estonia and won popularity for refusing to crack down on Estonia's drive for independence from the Soviet Union.

Reacting to the message, the Russian foreign ministry said: "This unprecedented cynical action underlines once again the real aspirations of Estonian nationalists, who did not miss a chance to demonstrate their hatred of Russia. It looks as if Tallinn has deliberately chosen the path of supporting terrorism."

Among the main issues clouding relations between Estonia and Moscow are a border dispute and Russia's contention that the authorities in Tallinn discriminate against the large ethnic Russian minority in Estonia.

Western governments are concerned at the frosty atmosphere in Estonian-Russian relations as they have strongly supported the independence of Estonia and the two other Baltic states, Latvia and Lithuania. The West has held back from offering security guarantees to the Baltic states, a factor that complicates their hopes of joining the European Union.



Garrotted: Big business is behind the new regulations for the Rastro, which could force small traders out of the popular flea-market. Photograph: Robert Harding Picture Library

Trader's tax squeezes Madrid's flea market

ELIZABETH NASH
Madrid

Traders of the Rastro, the best known flea-market in Spain, are up in arms over plans by Madrid's regional government that they fear will choke off their livelihood. They say proposals to regulate street selling will slash their number from 1,745 to 300 and transform the face of the capital's much loved landmark.

The draft law would oblige street sellers to pay an "economic activities" tax plus insurance and social security contributions that traders fear could amount to £180 a month. But many make so little from their stalls that they would be driven away, according to the Independent Association of Rastro Traders that represents the majority of the stallholders.

"We work only on Sundays and for most of us it is the only income we have. Some people have been coming for 30 or 40 years, artisans selling their own handicrafts, and we can't afford to pay extra taxes. The authorities are treating us as professional traders, but most of us are not," says the traders' president, Mario Agreda.

Mr Agreda believes the regulations would break a traditional bond between the people of Madrid, international visitors for whom the Rastro is as essential a part of life as the Prado, and the workers of the area. "They are squeezing us with a vile garrote, so that we will disappear, trying to make us into dinosaurs, an extinct species," Mr Agreda said yesterday.

At present, Rastro traders pay only an annual fee for the right to occupy a spot on the street. There is no actual street called the Rastro. The area, a focus of informal trading for centuries, covers a vast sprawl of streets in what used to be known as the "low quarters", a nod to the area's working class origins and its low-lying situation.

It fans out from the Plaza Cascorro, dominated by a monument honouring a soldier from a nearby orphanage who volunteered for a suicide mission against Cuban rebels in 1890. Up to half a million people cram through on a summer Sunday. The area is studded with tapas bars, which as lunch time approaches become filled with those seeking wine, prawns and respite from the sun that spears you in the face. These bars "would all die" warns Mr Agreda.

The head of the UGT union's trade and restaurants division, Daniel Prieto, says the regulations are inspired by business interests. "Street trading accounts for huge sums of money, and big companies want to push the little antique dealers or jewellery makers or quill pen collectors out of this traditional centre, so that they can move in themselves," he said yesterday.

Eugenio Morales, a Socialist on Madrid's city council, which is run by the conservative Popular Party, said his group would propose the opening of a consultation process at the council meeting next Tuesday. "Any new regulation must arise from discussions among those affected, the traders and neighbourhood associations, everyone involved in the Rastro. You can't impose a law that no one wants, or you'll have trouble," he warned yesterday.

Those responsible for the proposals say the Rastro would have to comply, but amendments will be considered. Carlos Caballero, head of trade and consumer affairs for the regional government, said yesterday:

"We are preparing a law that will regulate street trading in general, and the Rastro is one of many street markets. Our aim is to dignify the profession of street trader and protect the consumer. But if the Town Hall asks us to make an exception for the Rastro we are prepared to consider their request."

VACANCY.

MUST SPEAK FLUENT LATIN.



When the monks who lived at Bury St. Edmunds abbey in the 13th century were allowed to speak (which wasn't very often), Latin was the holy order of the day.

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ABBOT ALE

FROM GREENE KING

IN BRIEF

Cypriot hijack plane heads for Bulgaria

Ankara — A Turkish Cypriot plane with at least 100 passengers on board was hijacked last night on its way to Istanbul, an airline official said. The Boeing 727 was reported to be heading for Sofia, Bulgaria. The passengers included Russians, Iranians, Bulgarians and Turks, said Umit Ulku, head of the Turkish Cypriot airline. AP

Killer confesses

Paris — A former soldier in the Bosnian Serb army has described his part in the execution of about 1,200 Bosnian Muslim prisoners in a single day after the fall of Srebrenica last summer. Dragan Erdemovic told the newspaper *Le Figaro* he believed he personally shot dead about 70 people. Reuter

Aids robber dies

Turin — Ferdinando Attanasio, 38, a member of the "Aids Gang", a trio who robbed banks knowing they could not go to jail because of their illness, has died in a Turin hospital. Reuter

Amnesty plea

Cape Town — A self-confessed assassin of the apartheid era, Dirk Coetzee, said he had applied to Archbishop Desmond Tutu's Truth and Reconciliation Commission for an amnesty for 27 crimes including six murders. Reuter

Goya painting found

Madrid — Workers renovating a Madrid government building have stumbled upon a previously unknown painting by Francisco de Goya. Prado Museum curators confirmed the painting, which depicts souls in purgatory and religious figures, is a Goya. AP

22 die as flats fall

Bombay — Rescue workers dug 22 bodies from the rubble of a collapsed apartment building and searched for up to seven missing people. The death toll could reach 30, said Bombay's chief fire officer. AP

Age of content

Columbia, South Carolina — Senator Strom Thurmond, at 93 and 94 days, yesterday became the oldest person ever to sit in the Senate. "It's just another day as far as I'm concerned," said Mr Thurmond. AP

Lafontaine milks ethnic German debate for votes

IMRE KARACS
Bonn

The inalienable right of Eastern Europe's German diaspora to migrate to the Fatherland has come under attack from leading opposition politicians, sparking a furious, almost racist row.

As an estimated 700,000 eligible applicants await their turn "with suitcases packed" to join the annual flow of 220,000 Volga Germans from Russia, the government in Bonn, egged on by the opposition Social Democrats, is preparing to stem the tide. Germany says it can no longer afford the *Aussiedler* - "settlers" - a term used for people of German ancestry who are guaranteed citizenship and the right of residence under the country's constitution.

Though the government has been secretly working on a plan to cut the annual quota, the issue was unexpectedly lobbed into the political arena last weekend by Oskar Lafontaine, the leader of the Social Democrats. "We have taken in 3.5 million immigrants," he said. "In the last few years we have taken in 1 million extra people of working age, and they are walk-

ing straight into unemployment - into unemployment benefit or to draw a pension or to get welfare support."

This year 3.3bn marks (£1.5m) of public money is earmarked to help the *Aussiedler* to integrate into society, and another DM1.1bn will be paid out in pensions to Germans who were not born in Germany. At a time of rising unemployment and stagnating economy, this is fuelling resentment among voters, a sentiment Mr Lafontaine, with an eye on forthcoming regional elections, is now trying to tap.

But his remark, formalised on Tuesday by a Bundestag motion which called for the right of return to be restricted to those who already have relatives in Germany, has degenerated into a debate about ethnicity. Initially denouncing Mr Lafontaine for "populist demagoguery", the government was nevertheless quick to concede that many of the *Aussiedler* now arriving were not really German at all.

Radio talk-shows are overheating as the nation argues for the first time in 50 years over what constitutes an ethnic German. Callers cite anecdotal ev-

idence of alarming crime rates in *Aussiedler* neighbourhoods, of purported Germans speaking in strange tongues, and of a deplorable work ethic.

Opinion polls show the *Aussiedler* are not much more popular than Bosnian refugees. According to a survey in the weekly *Die Woche* this week, 70 per cent agree with Mr Lafontaine's proposal to limit their number.

Those who match expectations of cultural identity may nevertheless bring in spouses from the steppes of Central Asia, where the Volga Germans were dispersed by Stalin after Hitler's invasion in 1941. Even if their families do not find integration hard, their new neighbours in Germany often do.

This is the racist undercurrent Mr Lafontaine stirred up. Critics say the issue was conjured up for the elections in the southern Land of Baden-Württemberg, the third most popular *Aussiedler* destination last year. The state also has 10 per cent of the vote up for grabs, captured by the now-defunct extreme right Republicans five years ago. These are the votes Mr Lafontaine is now hoping to win.

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دكان الأمان

Dole must ride Southern wave to White House

RUPERT CORNWELL
Jacksonville, Florida

Don Brewer's pride and joy is The Chart. It stands on the wall of his office here, plotting how in the space of 109 days last year, John Delaney rose from 3 per cent in the polls to be elected the first Republican mayor of Jacksonville since the Reconstruction era after the Civil War.

True, Mr Delaney had a little help: a split Democratic field, the city's capture of a brand new NFL franchise, the Jacksonville Jaguars, in which he was largely instrumental – and of course the enthusiasm and zeal of Mr Brewer, a local party chairman whose sheer love of the game of politics bubbles in every word he utters.

Not of course that Mr Delaney's stunning victory of 1995 has much direct bearing on the pre-ordained victory of Bob Dole on Tuesday in Florida when, barring an astounding reversal, he will scoop up the 98 delegates at stake in the presidential primary. At the present pace – and especially after Mr Dole won all 93 delegates in New York on Thursday – "Super Tuesday" is turning into "Superfluous Tuesday", just another step in his progress towards coronation at the party convention in San Diego this August.

Lamar Alexander had made a big push here, but the former Tennessee Governor pulled out this week and threw his support behind Mr Dole. Steve Forbes's flat-tax message may stir some excitement in Florida's retiree community, and Pat Buchanan will doubtless pick up votes among born-again Christians and sundry right-wingers in these northern parts of Florida, rooted in old Dixie.

Indeed, Mr Buchanan's operation in Jacksonville last month provided one of the more bizarre incidents so far of Election '96, when it was revealed that his volunteer local organiser, Susan Lamb, was a follower of David Duke, Ku Klux Klanist, white su-

THE US PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

premacist and erstwhile candidate for Governor of Louisiana. Television crews and reporters descended on Republican headquarters here to search for incriminating racist literature. The hunt was in vain, but the embarrassment for Jacksonville Republicans was real. "Obviously we can't do background checks on everyone who offers to help a candidate," said Mr Brewer. "But this perception of



Bob Dole: His party must learn how to be a majority

Mr Buchanan will hurt our party. The real question is why people like Ms Lamb are attracted to him."

So Mr Dole is, the man with the machine but no message – managing none the less to find a little something for everyone in this rootless state. Up here his conservatism and military record plays well. The senior citizens in their retirement communities see one of their own in a man of 72, while down south his fulminations against Fidel Castro please the Cuban-Americans in Miami. "In Florida especially," said Matt Corrigan, political scientist at North Florida University here, "momentum is everything, and right now Dole has it. I expect him to get 40 to 50 per cent."

But will that momentum last until November? In Florida, as across the country, thoughts are already turning to the general election. "It's time to put this thing to bed," Mr Dole told his New York victory party by satellite from a campaign stop in Tampa Bay/St Petersburg on Thursday evening. "If the others want to stay in, they should focus on Bill Clinton, not me. Let's move on to the big job, of restoring conservative leadership to the White House." Which leads us back to Mayor John Delaney.

His election last May was yet more proof of the change that is redrawing the US socio-political map – the secular shift of the South from Democrats to Republicans. Florida is one of the last hold-outs. The Republicans have a majority of the state senate and, Mr Brewer says, will capture its House of Representatives this autumn. But one of its senators is still a Democrat, and a brilliant 1994 campaign enabled Lawton Chiles to hang on as Governor.

This is the wave that Mr Dole must ride to win the White House. "The trouble is there's no enthusiasm for him," noted Mr Corrigan. "You can't establish a base here because the base is always moving." Florida, so much of it a glitzy, transient, anywhere USA "is a restless place, always channel-surfing politically and socially." And therein lies Mr Clinton's opportunity.

Although Florida has voted Republican in every presidential election since 1980, Mr Chiles' win has Democrats this year hoping. All the more vital therefore for Republicans to consolidate their gains in the north of the state. But despite The Chart, Mr Brewer is a worried man.

Part stems from the sheer lack of excitement Mr Dole arouses, part from a failure to adjust after the conquest of Congress in 1994. "Our advance is not irreversible," Mr Brewer warned. "We still haven't learnt how to be a majority."

Dole profile, page 19



Family affair: Steve Forbes with his daughters in New York where he pledged to stay in the race Photograph: Reuter

Court supports right to die

TIM CORNWELL
Los Angeles

The ruling by a US federal appeal court declaring a constitutional right to die has sharply divided American doctors and set the scene for a painful national debate over the issue of assisted suicide.

The strongly worded decision was a virtual invitation to the Supreme Court to step into a thorny area of medical ethics that, like abortion, pits the sanctity of life against personal freedom of choice, legal experts said.

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco declared on Wednesday that a mentally competent, terminally ill adult "has a strong liberty interest in choosing a dignified and humane death rather than being reduced at the end of his existence to a child-like state of helplessness, disoriented, sedated, incompetent".

The ruling in a case involving three terminally ill patients, all of whom have since died, applies to nine western states from California to Alaska.

The court overturned local statutes banning assisted suicide and said doctors, pharmacists and family members who helped a patient to an early death were not to be prosecuted. Its decision came as a jury in Michigan yesterday debated the case of Dr Jack Kevorkian, the controversial figure known as "Dr Death" who has flouted US laws by helping 27 people take their own lives. He faces up to four years in jail.

Though polls suggest a majority of US doctors favour legalising assisted suicide, the American Medical Association attacked the ruling, along with some churches. Right-to-life groups raised the spectre of bungled mercy killings and of people pushed into choosing death by the pressure of medical bills or impatient family members.

The Ninth Circuit has a longstanding reputation as one of the most liberal appeal courts in the country and has often been over-ruled by the Supreme Court. Washington state prosecutors, who brought the case, have 90 days to appeal.

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DAY ONE.
Prayer, chanting and good works.

DAY TWO.
More prayer, chanting and good works.

DAY THREE.
More of the above.

DAY FOUR.
Ditto.

DAY FIVE.
More ditto.

DAY SIX.
Even more ditto.

DAY SEVEN.
At last! Arrival of the Abbot's Ale after 7 days fermentation. Celebrate with prayer, chanting and good works



ABBOT ALE

FROM GREENE KING

obituaries / gazette

M. Krishnan

M. Krishnan was the biggest name in Indian wildlife photography. Without him several of India's wildlife sanctuaries would never have been set up and the conservation work of Operation Tiger would have been far poorer in concept and design. Within the Indian Board of Wildlife he was the voice of the forest. Like the footprints of the *Elephas maximus* (the Indian elephant) that he photographed so extensively, Krishnan's stature will be measured now, after he has passed on.

The secret of Krishnan's success lay, of course, in the quality of his photographs. They were not slick, not the kind that take your breath away, but they had a clarity, a purity; they were the closest thing to the original. The uncompromisingly accurate texts that accompanied his pictures, fortnight after fortnight, in the English-language newspaper the *Satishman* of Calcutta, were another triumph. His column "Country Notebook", begun in 1950, ran continuously for 45 years. The last entry appeared the day he died, making it the oldest surviving column in Indian journalism. It had a cult following, and was read by ecologists and lay readers alike for its accuracy and authenticity, and for the quality of his English prose.

Some of Krishnan's popular writings were put together in a fascinating book, *Jungle and Backyard* (1963), published in Britain in 1993 and still in print, which tells the story of a man who belongs to that margin of life where the human and animal worlds are not, after all, so separate. It is illustrated not by photographs but by ink-drawings. Krishnan was an extraordinarily gifted sketcher, and the book ranks with the best in English lay writing on nature, but without compromising his first principle: total accuracy of observation.

In the mid-1960s, Krishnan was given a Fellowship by the Jawaharlar Nehru Memorial Fund to do an ecological mammalian survey of peninsular India.

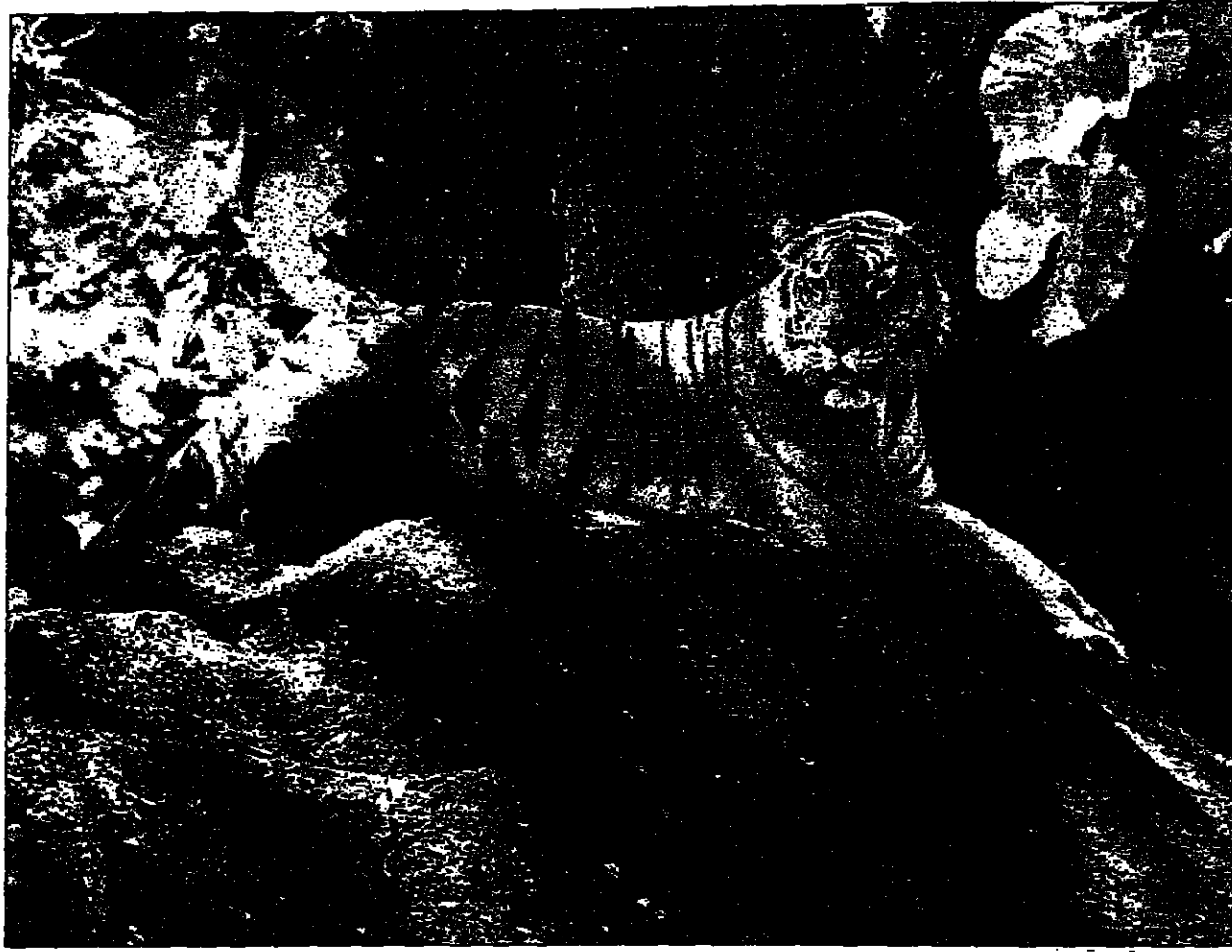
He carried out the assignment with matchless skill, monumental patience and unremitting labour. His unique understanding of animal behaviour helped. Be it the *dhole* (wild dog) in Kerala, the elephant in Mudumalai-Bandipur (Tamil Nadu-Kerala) or the tiger in Kanha (Madhya Pradesh), Krishnan understood, Blake-like, the immortal hand or eye that entitled him to frame its fearful symmetry. Describing how he photographed a tigress from the top of an elephant at Kanha, he wrote:

I was positively anxious not to do anything that might panic her, as the impossibly contrasty lighting, with the overhead sun casting patches of dense shade and brilliant highlights all over, presented quite sufficient photographic problems without the added one of the subject bolting. However, in an attempt to get her to raise her head and open her eyes fully, loud clucks with the tongue were tried, to no effect. Every time the elephant was moved, the noise of its feet on the litter-scrum ground made her open her eyes partially, for a vital confirmation of her hearing, and I was able to get her to raise her head and stare sleepily only by making the elephant shuffle its feet without moving.

His illustrated report *India's Wildlife* (1975) is a rigorously scientific document, perhaps the first and last of its kind to be produced in post-independent India. It is also Krishnan's magnum opus.

Krishnan's forest visits were frequent and seemingly interminable. He was away on one of his indefinite absences in a remote forest in 1970 when his wife, Indu, opened a telegram seeking Krishnan's willingness to receive the President of India's decoration of Padma Shri.

Indu wired "his" acceptance at once: she knew her husband. He could take months returning or, equally likely, decline the honour as patronising. In fact, he rather appreciated the presidential gesture because national and international awards were the only kind of recognition he was likely to get; he was too proud to seek professional awards, or enter contests, to lobby critics or the press. Krishnan refused to accept.



The Tigress on the Rock, photograph by M. Krishnan. For Krishnan, nature always came before the art and science of photography

much less adapt, to new technology. Modern technology outpaced his hand-assembled camera; his developing and printing techniques seemed to belong to a bygone age. For him the function of the camera was to record without bias. His lenses were never in competition with the subject; for Krishnan, nature always came before the art and science of photography. Self-adjusting light and distance mechanisms, for him, were shortcuts unworthy of forests.

Even as younger and more successful cameramen whizzed from forest to "ethnic" site to exhibition venues in the western hemisphere, Krishnan's travel remained confined to where his subjects were—in the dappled forests of India. Except for field trips, he rarely left Madras, visiting Delhi a few times perhaps, and never once going abroad. Neither did he hold photo exhibitions, nor publish "coffee-table" books. Krishnan could be scathing about the fast-spawning school

of "nature writers", pointing out their scant attention to detail. In his opinion, you had to know about the taxonomy, the morphology, the behavioural patterns, before you wrote or took "pictures", as he called them.

Krishnan's camera took in the non-animal world too, although warily. He did some remarkable photography, in the mid-1970s, of the little-known monuments of Pudukkottai, a former princely state near the town of Trichirappalli in Tamil Nadu. Using long exposures and no flash he captured the 12th-century fresco secco murals in the Jaina cave at Sittannavasal for the *Pudukkottai District Gazetteer*. Krishnan knew that his photography of the fading Sittannavasal murals reproduced in the *Gazetteer* would be invaluable as a historic record, which is perhaps why he allowed me to photograph him operating his camera—a rare privilege.

Encouraged as a youth by his father (the novelist Madhaviah) to become a lawyer, Krishnan did obtain the degree. But while this gave his no-nonsense mind an additional weapon to engage income-tax and other government agencies with, he never adopted the profession. He was a serious scholar of early Tamil, inheriting the skill from his father. He enjoyed quibbling over the two-looped "n" in that ancient script. More recently, he attempted writing a Tamil detective story.

Never guilty of underestimating his own exceptional talent, Krishnan nonetheless lived a life of self-imposed obscurity. When not in the forests, he hibernated in the bush cover of his home-cum-studio in Madras. Krishnan's reclusion was notorious. He would meet callers only if he approved of them; others ran the risk of being dismissed without ceremony. If you were among the lucky ones, Krishnan would emerge from his darkroom bare-chested, barefoot and in none-too-fresh a lungi, to regale you for an hour or more with an acerbic monologue. Reference to some official stonewalling of a forest project or the jejune writing of an ecological "specialist" would ignite the guru. "What do they know?" was a favourite riposte.

And generally Krishnan would be right. Even those who knew a great deal managed to lag behind Krishnan in knowledge of the field. The impaling of his *bête noire* over, he would return to his studio, very much like the Indian porcupine he has described:

Apart from the noise made by the rattling of the hollow tail quills when surprised the porcupine bristles out its body quills at once, with a swishing sound, suddenly growing large and indistinct; its gateway is marked by sharply angled tines, and when it has put some distance between itself and what alarms it, the quills subside suddenly, so that the animal becomes much smaller, darker and harder to see.

Gopel Gandhi

Madhaviah, Krishnan, wildlife photographer and writer: born 30 June 1912; married (one son); died Madras 18 February 1996.

Eric Briault

Eric Briault, geographer, athlete, conscientious objector and educator, will be remembered for his enormous contribution to the education service in London. For 20 years he was the Deputy Education Officer (1956-71) and then the Education Officer (1971-76), initially of the London County Council, then of its successor body, the Inner London Education Authority. He was a leading proponent of the large comprehensive school as the solution to the problems of selection and the abolition of the 11 plus. He never ceased to be, at heart, a teacher—though he became a brilliant administrator.

Eric was a scholarship boy. He followed that route through grammar school in Brighton to Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he took a First in Geography and gained Blues as a middle-distance and cross-country runner. He then went straight into teaching, but continued his studies by working on land utilisation in Sussex, gaining a PhD in 1939. His interest in geography, especially in field studies, remained. For 10 years (1953-63) he was honorary secretary of the Royal Geographical Society.

After 15 years' teaching, including a decade as Head of Geography at Latimer Upper School in Hammersmith, he was appointed Inspector of Geography with the LCC. That post carried with it the respon-

coherent values system, which made it impossible for him to comprehend the events at the William Tyndale Junior School in 1975. If he had had his way, the teachers would have been summarily dismissed; in the event, he was still giving evidence to the subsequent disciplinary tribunal in his last week of service with the ILEA.

His experience and interests meant that Briault was more concerned with London's schools than with the rest of the service, even though the ILEA had an exceptionally well-developed further and adult education service, and was responsible for about one-fifth of the country's polytechnic higher education. Briault's practice was to ensure that his senior colleagues working in the post-schools sector were on top of the job, and then, except in the provision of teacher training, to let them get on with it.

In this way, a major reorganisation of the ILEA's further education colleges was carried through in the early 1970s, and the support of the great polytechnics rested on other shoulders, even during the travails at the Polytechnic of North London. Briault continued his commitment into semi-retirement, when, having moved to Sussex, he worked as a visiting professor at the university.

He was fortunate with his politicians. In those days, public service in the great county education authorities attracted very committed and able people. London was no exception, and Eric Briault's name will always be coupled with those of (Sir) Ashley Bramall, Leader of the ILEA from 1970, and the very knowledgeable group of senior politicians who worked with him. For a brief period, it seemed as though the formidable team of tough politicians united with the highly competent officers under Eric Briault's leadership could really transform the London education service for the benefit of those it sought to serve. It was not to be, though: to many observers, it seemed to lie across the road in the DES, and in Westminster; rather than in County Hall.

Throughout his life, Briault was a committed, practising Christian. His firm faith had led him to register as a conscientious objector in the Second World War, and Protestant Christian values underpinned all he sought to do. Even when he was "the Education Officer", his colleagues knew that only the most important and immediate matter would keep him away from weekly choir practice at his church in Harrow.

To many, he seemed on first meeting to be almost excessively reserved. But he was capable of great personal warmth. He and his wife Marie (who survived him by only six days) regularly entertained newly appointed junior colleagues at their home; his human legacy is to be found in the many former members of ILEA staff who will remember him with affection and respect.

John Bevan

Eric William Henry Briault, teacher and education officer: born London 24 December 1911; Inspector of Schools, LCC 1948-56; Deputy Education Officer, ILEA 1956-71; Education Officer, ILEA 1971-76; CBE 1976; Visiting Professor of Education, Sussex University 1977-81, 1984-85; married 1933 Marie Knight (died 1996; two sons, one daughter); died Harrow, Sussex 14 January 1996.



Briault: London schools

abilities of being the District Inspector for Lambeth. This was Briault's first exposure to working with underprivileged inner-city children, and it marked all his subsequent career. Much later, in 1973, there appeared in the *Introduction to an Education Service for the Whole Community* (the only ILEA report ever circulated to every teacher in London) the sentence:

We are sometimes dismayed by the way in which children are tugged apart by the divergent influences upon them: a home which has no contact with school, teachers who do not appreciate the degree of deprivation to which the child has been subjected, the leisure group, the gang, with an ethos quite different from that of either home or school.

It could have been the young Eric Briault speaking.

As an inspector with a solid teaching background, Briault well understood the need to combine support for teachers in the classroom with constructive criticism of their failings. In difficult situations, as at Rishingshill Comprehensive, where he arranged for the Head's departure, he could, and did, act swiftly and resolutely when he thought that children were being short-changed. His earlier experiences stood him in good stead later on when the ILEA became the subject of adverse criticism from ill-informed sources.

At the same time, he had the weaknesses of his strengths. He could not understand those whose approach to children's needs was uninformed by any

Minnie Pearl

"Humor is the least recorded but certainly one of the most important aspects of live country music." If this statement is in any way true, much of the credit lies with the woman on whose plaque in Nashville's Country Music Hall of Fame it has been inscribed: Minnie Pearl.

For over half a century "Cousin" Minnie was among the most popular and beloved stars of Music City's WSM *Grand Ole Opry* radio show, and was one of a select group of performers able to lay claim to the status of "Nashville legend".

Striding on to the *Opry* stage she would greet the audience with a shrill "Howdee! I'm just so proud to be here!" before filling them in on her latest unsuccessful efforts to "ketch a feller". Her trademark was a wide-brimmed, beflowered straw hat, dangling a \$1.98 price-tag. Nashville lore has it she had forgotten to remove it on her debut and retained it afterwards for good luck. In fact she always made her own hats.

Born in 1912, Pearl always claimed to have come from Grindler's Switch, Tennessee, in reality a railroad junction station just outside Centerville, the hometown of her alter ego and creator Sarah Ophelia Colley.

Passionately interested in vaudeville as a child, she studied stage technique at the exclusive Ward Belmont College, Nashville, graduating with a degree in speech and drama. From 1934 she worked for the Atlanta-based Wayne B. Sewell Co., directing amateur theatre productions throughout the region.

It was during this period that she began to develop her comic persona, observing and absorbing the characteristics and traits of people she encountered on her travels, notably those of an Alabama woman whom she always later cited as the original "Minnie Pearl". She auditioned in November 1940 for the famous radio barn dance *The Grand Ole Opry*, receiving a mere \$10. Invited back the fol-

lowing Sunday she joined the regular cast.

Her arrival on the *Opry* coincided with a sea-change in its talent line-up as it moved away from a reliance on old-time string bands like the Crook Brothers, towards a roster of solo stars, notably her friend and mentor Roy Acuff. In 1943 she joined Ernest Tubbs, Pee Wee King and other *Opry* stars as part of the "Camel Caravan" which toured military bases entertaining the troops, and in 1947 performed in the first country show held at Carnegie Hall in New York.

At the end of the war, the comedian Rod Brasfield joined the *Opry* cast and although his somewhat risqué humour was at odds with Pearl's, they proved a popular double act until his death in 1958.

Despite her renown on radio and later television, Minnie Pearl never enjoyed much success as a singer. Although she cut sides for EMI, Starday and RCA—including "Papa

Loves Mambo", a delightfully awful duet with Grandpa Jones—she broke into the Top Ten only once with "Giddy Up Go Answer" (1966), a response to Red Sovine's 1965 chart-topper. Television, however, first through *Hee Haw* and then *The Nashville Network*, brought her monologues and corny jokes into the homes of millions of Americans. In 1975 she received the genre's highest accolade, election to the Country Music Hall of Fame.

Although latterly plagued by ill-health (she had a debilitating stroke in 1991), Pearl remained a revered figure; one whose example as the first major female star in country music was rightfully acknowledged by the generations of country women who have followed.

Paul Wadey

Sarah Ophelia Colley (Minnie Pearl), emcee/radio host: born Centerville, Tennessee 25 October 1912; married 1947 Henry Cannon; died Nashville 4 March 1996.



Pearl: "Howdee! I'm just so proud to be here!" Photograph: Reuters

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

FOX / BENNETT: On 27 February, to Ruth and Philip, a son, Alfie Fox. A brother for Patrick and Thomas.

DEATHS

RACKHAM: Arthur. Peacefully at home after a long illness, aged 73 years, on 6 March 1996. Wife: merchant, dearly loved husband of Billie and dear father of Gillian, Pamela and James. Requiem mass at St. Enoch's Church, Wallon-on-Thames, Thursday 14 March 1996, followed by a burial at Burial Ground, Harlow, at 11.15am. Family donations only. Donations to be sent to Wallon Community Hospital, c/o Mrs Caroline Slickney, Hospital Administrator (in memory of Arthur Henry Rackham), Rodney Road, Wallon-on-Thames, Surrey KT11 5LB.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Weddings, Funerals, etc.) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 (24-hour answering machine), 0171-293 2012 or faxed to 0171-293 2016, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

Changing of the Guard

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment moves the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment moves the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. 1st (London Irish Guards) moves the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am. Hand provided by the Grenadier Guards.

Birthdays

TODAY: Air Marshal Sir Roger Austin, Controller, Aircrew, Ministry of Defence, 56; Mr Bill Beaumont, broadcaster and former rugby player, 44; Mr Andrew Bennett MR 57; Dr Michael Brock, former Warden, St George's House, Windsor Castle, 76; Mr Andre Courreges, couturier, 71; Sir Roderick Cunningham-Bruce, former Lord of Appeal, 84; Mr Bob Fischer, chess champion, 53; Mr John Golding, trade union leader, 65; Maj-Gen John Groom, former division, 62; Sir Neil Hamilton MR 47; Professor Sir Donald Harrison, laryngologist, 71; Dr Thomas Johnson, former Principal, Heriot-Watt University, 69; General Sir Frank King, 77; Sir Norman Lindop, chemist and osteopath, 75; Mr Robin Martin, former chairman, Hewson plc, 73; Mr David Matthews, composer, 53; Sir Nicholas Monck, former permanent secretary, Department of Employment, 61; Sir Donald Rattee, High Court judge, 59; Professor Kenneth Robinson, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Hong Kong, 62; Mr Wilkie Spillane, novelist, 78; Lord Turlow, former Governor of the Bahamas, 84; Mr Robin Trower, rock guitarist, 52; Professor Sir David Weatherall, haematologist, 63; Mr David Willetts MR 40.

TOMORROW: Prince Edward, 32; Sir Lawrence Airey, former chairman, Board of Inland Revenue, 70; Sir Robert Bellenger, former Lord Mayor of London, 88; Air Chief Marshal Sir Brian Burnett, 83; Sir Paul Condon, Commissioner, Metropolitan Police, 49; Baroness Falkender, former Private and Political Secretary to Lord Wilson of Rievaulx, 64; Mr Fou Ts'ong, pianist, 62; Sir Angus Fraser, former chairman of the Board of Customs and Excise, 68; Dame Margaret Fry, political organiser, 65; Rear-Admiral Sir John Garnier, private secretary to Princess

Alexandra, 62; Sir Samuel Goldman, former senior civil servant, 84; Sir Charles Hardie, chartered accountant, 80; Mr Warren Hawley MR 53; Mr Terry Holmes, rugby player, 57; General Sir John Learmonth, former Quartermaster General, Ministry of Defence, 62; Mr Anthony Leonard, Chief Constable, Humber-side, 57; Mr Michael Montague, chairman, Montague Multinational Ltd, 64; Mr Graeme Ogden, chairman, Monopolies and Mergers Commission, 61; Sir Michael Straker, former chairman, Northumbrian Water, 68; Mr Peter Wormold, Registrar General for England and Wales, 60.

Anniversaries

TODAY: Births: Honore-Gabriel Riquet, Comte de Mirabeau, statesman, 1749; Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky, composer, 1839; Ernest Bevin, statesman, 1881; Victoria Mary Sackville-West, novelist, 1892; Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin, astronaut, 1934; Deshaun David Rizzo, musician and secretary to Mary, Queen of Scots, murdered 1586; Jules Mazarin, cardinal and statesman, 1661; Samuel Jebb, physician and scholar, 1772; Arnold Toynbee, social philosopher, 1883. On this day: Pope Gregory VII declared all married Roman Catholic priests to be excommunicated, 1074; Napoleon Bonaparte married Josephine de Beauharnais, 1796; Louis-Philippe of France founded the French Foreign Legion in Algeria, 1831; King George V laid the foundation stone of London County Hall, 1912. Today is: Feast Day of St. Basil, St. Calixtus of Bologna, St. Dominic Savio, St. Francis of Rome, St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Paganus.

TOMORROW: Births: John Playfair, mathematician and geologist, 1748; Tamara Platonovna Karsavina, bal-

lerina, 1885; Bix Beiderbecke, jazz cornet-player and composer, 1903; Deshaun David Rizzo, musician and secretary to Mary, Queen of Scots, murdered 1586; Modest Petrovich Mussorgsky, composer, 1839; Ernest Bevin, statesman, 1881; Victoria Mary Sackville-West, novelist, 1892; Yuri Alekseyevich Gagarin, astronaut, 1934; Deshaun David Rizzo, musician and secretary to Mary, Queen of Scots, murdered 1586; Jules Mazarin, cardinal and statesman, 1661; Samuel Jebb, physician and scholar, 1772; Arnold Toynbee, social philosopher, 1883. On this day: Pope Gregory VII declared all married Roman Catholic priests to be excommunicated, 1074; Napoleon Bonaparte married Josephine de Beauharnais, 1796; Louis-Philippe of France founded the French Foreign Legion in Algeria, 1831; King George V laid the foundation stone of London County Hall, 1912. Today is: Feast Day of St. Basil, St. Calixtus of Bologna, St. Dominic Savio, St. Francis of Rome, St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Paganus.

Lectures

TODAY: National Gallery: James Heard, "Eyes and Ears (II): Ter Brugghen, The Convent", 12pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Clare Phillips, "Jewellery: the V&A's collection", 2.30pm. Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "The Real Art of War", 1pm. TOMORROW: Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "The Thames: a source of inspiration", 2.30pm. National Portrait Gallery: David McIlror, "James Abbe and Photography", 3pm.

Royal Aero Club

The Duke of York, President, Royal Aero Club, presented the Club's annual awards at a reception held yesterday at St James's Palace. The Britannia Trophy was awarded to Mr Chris Rollings and Mr Chris Pullen, the Silver Medal to Ms Judy Leden, and the Silver Medal to Mrs Diana Britten. Mr Frederick O. Marsh, Chairman, received the guests.

Antidissestablishmentarianism

faith & treason

Dr Edward Norman, Canon Treasurer of York Minster, argues that the sins of Prince Charles have no bearing on his public role. This article first appeared in the *Church Times*.

Few Supreme Governors of the Church of England have practised Anglicanism to the letter. Two sovereigns have not been Anglicans at all (the first two Georges were Lutherans), one was a secret Roman Catholic (James II), the founder of the C of E was himself divorced (Henry VIII), one was a practising homosexual (James I), several have been known adulterers, and all of them, when north of the border, are Presbyterians.

This is not a record which suggests that personal adhesion to the church establishment teachings has consistently been regarded as an essential requirement for the office of Supreme Governor. The fact is that the Church is built into the fabric of the Constitution: it is the body entrusted with the maintenance of spiritual truth and which serves as the reference for the moral foundations. When anyone asks what is the moral basis of the law in England, they can be pointed towards this constitutional provision.

The link of Church and State is an historical survivor of the ancient confessional state; it is society continuing to uphold a belief that behind the fickleness of politicians, the easy manipulation of opinion, and the general shabbiness of public conceptions of truth and duty, there nevertheless resides a permanent reference to higher principles unaffected by the squalid naures of all of us.

Some people occupy posts which symbolise the historic vocation of society and preserve its formal structures for future generations. Their personal worthiness—indeed the worthiness of any of us for anything—scarcely comes into it. The State and the Constitution are taken to have permanent features which are untouched by

the personal circumstances of their present guardians.

It may be, of course, that the time has come to revise or to destroy this provision. It may be that the pursuit of liberal freedoms and the existence of a pluralism of values within the intelligentsia and the governing élites—and perhaps even within wider society—is now such that the exclusive maintenance of the Christian religion as the higher note of public association is outmoded.

The Prince of Wales himself, in his suggestion that his future constitutional role might be broadened to embrace the defence of other faiths, has hinted at an adjustment. It is not actually a very likely one. The only really serious philosophical difficulty with the State Church derives, not from unequal patronage, but from the existence of a link between government and religious opinion of any sort.

The idea of a future sovereign undertaking, in the Coronation Oath, to maintain Hinduism, Islam, and so forth, alongside the Christian religion, hap-

pens to match the prevailing penchant within educated opinion for regarding all religions as more or less the same. But it is a transient phase. Truth, particularly religious truth, has exact content, and the relativising of religion is an indication not of higher wisdom, but of increased scepticism.

This difficulty apart, the Prince of Wales is admirably suited to be Supreme Governor of the Church. That he is a confessed adulterer and may soon be divorced—which, even in the most generous moral understanding of the Anglican divines, are not helpful qualifications—is hardly relevant. He is plainly a man given to public duty, who has a marked dedication to the historical continuity of the Constitution. His duty as Supreme Governor will be to see that the union of throne and altar is preserved, and that he will do.

If the constitutional process itself determines change, on the other hand, and if a future parliament decides upon a disestablishment, then he is a man who can be relied upon to do his duty, and to help in winding up the present arrangements with as much dignity as may be available.

Such an eventually, incidentally, would not be without support within the Church itself. The link with the state dedicates the life of the nation but only in a highly symbolic sense. No one can any longer suppose that the governing élites, or Parliament, refers to the bishops when determining public policy—even in the most precise questions of personal morality.

But while the present arrangements exist, the person who symbolises the state's adhesion to higher truth is not to be regarded as personally exempted from the moral frailties of us all.

فكرنا من الأمل

The Tories should be worried about job insecurity

At last there is something tangible to celebrate from the upturn in the economy. With yesterday's fall in interest rates – the third cut in four months – most people, not just shareholders and fat-cat executives, are beginning to feel better off. Mortgages will be cheaper after yesterday's news – by up to £20 a month on an average mortgage. Retail sales, reflecting consumer confidence, are well up. House prices have now been rising steadily since the summer, chipping away at negative equity. Meanwhile, income tax cuts due in April, windfall gains from building societies turning into banks and the release of funds from maturing Tessas are all leading to an increased sense of wellbeing. There are some losers. Savers, notably elderly people, may be worried by the decline in interest rates, but many continue to benefit from a low-inflation economy.

All this fresh confidence means that the 3 per cent growth sought by Kenneth Clarke but generally thought unachievable a few months ago might just be attainable. It may not be the balanced growth – divided between exports and domestic demand – that the Chancellor has proclaimed a conventional type of British growth, fuelled by consumer spending – export performance has deteriorated and with it prospects for manufacturing. In short, the economy is behaving as it typically does during the year before a general election.

Nevertheless, inflation remains a distant fear. Mr Clarke can reasonably expect to meet his inflation targets; hence the Bank of England's willingness to cut interest rates again. And the un-

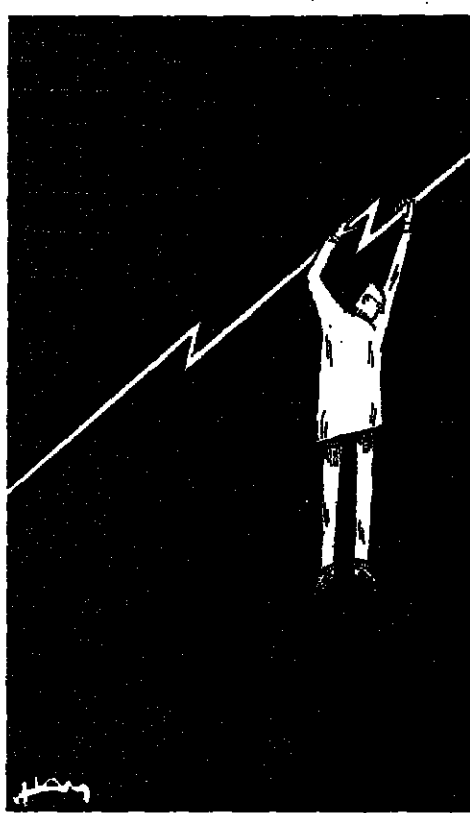
expectedly lengthy period – 29 months on the run – in which unemployment has fallen demonstrates that growth has yet to create the wage pressures which traditionally price people out of work.

All of this augurs well for a government that hopes to hang on to its waver-thin parliamentary majority for long enough to reap the political dividend of economic growth. As Lord Desai, the Labour peer, said yesterday: "The economy will not be the weak spot of the Tories that we thought it could be." In the short term, at least, the "feel-good factor", that elusive elixir of the Eighties, may be about to return.

But it would be a mistake to think that this pleasant stage in the economic cycle is an answer to the more long-term structural difficulties that will still be with us long after the mortgage-rate cutting party has ended.

Job insecurity is, and will continue to be, a dominant feature of British life. There is, behind the economic upturn, a change going on in the structure of our working lives that is comparable with the Industrial Revolution. A report published yesterday by Business Strategies, a leading consultancy, tells the story – within 10 years, it expects nearly half the workforce to be covered by "flexible" arrangements such as temporary contracts, self-employment and part-time jobs.

This is a huge change compared with a couple of decades ago, when most people were sheltered from the effect of economic cycles by permanent jobs. In today's more flexible world, firms can push the impact of a business downturn on to workers by ending contracts or cutting part-time hours. Flexible workers often have to meet the costs of



their pensions, sick pay and their own training. They may, as now, enjoy the party when the economy is growing, but they will be on their own for the subsequent hangover, when the economy falters. Yesterday's drop in the stock market offered a fleeting image of how boom can turn to bust.

It is generally accepted that greater job insecurity is one of the prices we pay for lower unemployment. The availability of a more flexible workforce, easier to hire and fire, encourages employers to take on more staff. This is one reason why Britain, along with the United States, enjoys lower unemployment than European competitors. At 7.9 per cent, the rate here compares favourably with 11.3 per cent in Germany (more than 4 million people) and 11.8 in France.

But there is an economic – and a political – question as to how far this insecurity should be allowed to develop. Insecurity can do great damage, leaving people constantly on edge about where or whether they will still have a job on Monday morning. Planning for the future becomes difficult. Insecurity can make people work harder than is good either for themselves or their families. The social consequences are illustrated by plans by the pressure group Parents at Work to hold a "National Go Home On Time Day" on Midsummer's Day.

The Government, however, has still not properly woken up to this issue, hoping that economic growth will be sufficient to calm fears and assuage popular anger about job insecurity. The insensitivity of ministers was demonstrated this week when it emerged that Michael Heseltine wants to scrap the unfair-dismissal rights of millions of workers in small firms. The Deputy Prime Minister

would like to remove the entitlement of up to 10 million workers to appeal to an industrial tribunal if they are sacked.

Mr Heseltine, as a businessman, is understandably attracted to this idea. It would free up many small businesses from obligations they regard as burdensome. Their sector is the engine of growth, producing more new jobs than any other part of the economy. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence that such firms feel frustrated by the employment legislation protecting their staff.

But none of this offers a good enough reason to scrap employment protection rules which may be the only line of defence for staff who are unlikely to be unionised. Mr Heseltine has produced no concrete evidence that access to industrial tribunals is damaging job creation by small companies. Indeed, the rapid expansion of this sector suggests that business people, though occasionally irritated by the law, do not regard it as a real impediment to their ambitions. Talk to any small businessman and you are likely to be told that their real enemies are not industrial tribunals but red tape governing their products, health and safety legislation and the failure of customers to pay their bills on time.

Some ministers have recognised that insecurity must be minimised where economically prudent: Kenneth Clarke has highlighted the role that the welfare state must play in underpinning confidence within the workforce. But more of Mr Clarke's colleagues must recognise that job insecurity is the key threat to their own survival if this week's welcome economic good news is to be translated into a general election victory for the Tories.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Big Bang and why our universe may not be alone

Sir: Infinity is hard to visualise, but impossible to deny. In infinite space-time, our universe, all 1.5bn light-years of it is, in human terms, less than a speck of dust existing for the blink of an eye. It is improbable – to me, inconceivable – that space-time was empty until the Big Bang happened and that our universe is its sole occupant. If conditions were right for the Bang to happen at one instant of space-time, the probability must be high that it was also right at other spaces and times. Infinite space-time should be littered with the results of other Big Bangs. If so, where is the evidence?

One possibility is that space-time has been filled with matter of the kind that wakes up our universe. One can visualise a random soup; but in such a soup, gravitational forces would cause matter to aggregate and then coalesce as in black holes. Further aggregation could result in gravitational collapse, leaving a zone with very little matter remaining free within its sphere of influence. If the enormous energy were then to be released in a Big Bang, a universe would be created.

If infinite space-time is filled with matter which is in a ferment of gravitational motion, it would be nice to postulate universes of matter and anti-matter in roughly equal numbers in collapsing and expanding modes. We may be seeing the first signs of such things in the Hubble observations of outer space.

Prof D M McDowell, Brighton, East Sussex
The writer is Emeritus Professor of Civil Engineering, Manchester University.

Sir: Dr Lowrie (Letters, 6 March) points out, in answer to

Professor Carswell, that the Big Bang is essentially unobservable, owing to the curvature of space. However, the excellent poster issued with the *Independent on Sunday* (3 March) refers to a period around 12 billion years ago as the "Universe's Dark Age" when the stars were too young to shine. So presumably, when telescopes have improved enough to see as far as 12 billion light years, there won't be anything to see at that distance, which at least would be negative evidence for the Big Bang.

MICHAEL BRAMSON, Wembley, Middlesex

Sir: I enjoyed your article "What on earth has space done for us" (4 March). However, you seem to have got the facts confused in describing how Roy Plunkett discovered Teflon in 1938.

You say "the gas had reacted with the cylinder, which was made of tetrafluoroethylene". Tetrafluoroethylene is a gas, not the sort of substance cylinders are made of. As I heard the story from Professor Eric Banks of Unist, an authority on organofluorine chemistry, Plunkett was surprised to find that a cylinder which should have contained tetrafluoroethylene was registering on the pressure gauge as being empty. He then took the brave step of cutting the cylinder open (a highly risky thing to do which would breach the safety regulations in any modern chemistry laboratory) and found that the tetrafluoroethylene had polymerised to give the greasy white solid, polytetrafluoroethylene, which became known as PTFE or Teflon.

D. ROBERTS, FRSC, Bebbington, Merseyside



The vision thing: Hubble being launched last year

Sir: I would like to thank you for your brilliant coverage of modern cosmology and keeping us up-to-date of the latest issues ("The universal question", *Magazine*, 2 March). I find this to be the most exciting news around at the present. So much so in fact that I was shocked to realise only today that none of the children in our Primary School knew anything of Hubble's revelations. I immediately

produced a whole series of cuttings in full colour from the *Independent* and both staff and children began to share the awe and excitement of this latest journey of discovery. But it only makes me wonder how many are still ignorant of the mysteries which surround us.

FR DOMINIC KIRKHAM, Canons Regular of Premonstrat, Manchester

Answering German question

Sir: Andrew Marr's article on Germany and Europe and Bryan Appleyard's concerning anti-educational cultures in Britain, point to a common truth. For politicians and others of Euro-sceptic views, the German question is one of envy rather than fear of war. How has it come about that the defeated Germans in 1945 have shown such economic, social and democratic progress when we British have fallen behind?

Many thousands of Brits, like me, have lived and worked in Germany since 1945. Most will agree that the UK and German ways of life have a great deal in common. Many also agree that the German democratic form of government is better than ours, with its regionalism and discussions prior to passing new laws.

The class system still unfortunately surviving in Britain is not replicated in Germany, and there are only a handful of private schools, mainly boarding. Germany's success has to a large extent depended on the excellence of its state education system, administered by the different *Länder* (regions).

Grammar, technical and secondary modern schools are the norm, and parents and pupils have absolute choice as to which type of school they attend. However, there is no automatic right to promotion according to age; pupils failing two subjects by the end of the school year have to repeat that year. Thus both parents and pupils have a much greater interest in education, especially as, at age 16, not having a good school leaving certificate means they cannot get an apprenticeship, applicable to all jobs.

The German question is really how can Europeans of other states match their achievements? Certainly not by being envious or pretending we do things better.

Mrs P WARD, Huddersfield

Sir: Andrew Marr thinks further European integration is too difficult and we had better come to terms with the status quo in a Europe that will inevitably be dominated by Germany ("Don't fudge it: the European question is Germany", 7 March).

That proposition is not acceptable either to most of our EU partners or to Germany's eastern neighbours. Above all it is not desired by Germany herself. For them, in a politically united Europe of 370 million, rising to 475 million within 20 years, a Germany of 80 million inhabitants will no doubt be important and influential but certainly not dominant.

This has always been one of the principal motives for European integration ever since the creation of the European Coal and steel Community in the 1950s. Difficult though the process has been, we are well on the way to an economic, monetary and political union, which has always been a clear objective for most EU members and Germany in particular. None of them wants a super-state, but they favour a union in which member states retain their national identities and autonomy for all matters that are not agreed in common.

Wishful thinking that they might fail or that Britain can stop them will merely repeat the costly errors of the past, when we chose not to join at the start.

ERNEST WISTRICH, London NW3

Royal pictures

Sir: The Royal Collection does not belong to the state (letter, 6 March) and does not receive public funding. Numerous works are on loan and even before the Queen recently placed her collection in the care of trustees pictures were toured for free viewing in municipal galleries. The collection has never been more accessible. Her Majesty opened the Queen's Gallery as early as 1962 and this summer Buckingham Palace will again be open to the public.

The "exorbitant entrance prices" at Hampton Court are the responsibility of the agency set up by the Government whose lack of arts funding is a scandal.

LEIGH HARTIS, London SE1

Safeguarding Whitehall code

Sir: When one of my most illustrious predecessors, Dennis Trevelyan, states (Letters, 6 March) that "it was felt necessary for the Queen and not, let it be noted, the government of the day to appoint the First Civil Service Commissioner", he implies that there has been a change in this respect. I feel I should make it clear that I, too, was appointed by the Queen in Council but, unlike my predecessors, after an open competition.

In addition, since I am not a civil servant with a career to pursue, I am free to assert my independence from the government of the day even more forcefully than they did. And I shall, should this ever prove necessary.

In the meantime I merely wish to add that it is the role of the Civil Service Commissioners, not the Recruitment and Assessment Services Agency, to ensure that the Civil Service Recruitment Code is followed by all Departments.

Sir MICHAEL BETT, First Civil Service Commissioner, Office of the Civil Service Commissioners, London SW1

The right sentence for violence

Sir: 1996 marks the 21st anniversary of the report of the Committee on Mentally Abnormal Offenders, chaired by the late Lord Butler, and I feel that both the Lord Chief Justice and the Home Secretary might well be advised to take down their copies, give them a dusting, and turn to the recommendation for a reviewable sentence.

This suggested that in cases where there was a substantial risk of committing a further violent offence the Crown Court could impose a sentence which would be subject to review at regular intervals, possibly every two years, with reports estimating the possible dangers to the public, and on release the

defendant being subject to supervision in much the same way as applies to those released from life imprisonment.

Such a sentence would meet the reservations of the Lord Chief Justice in that there would be less likelihood of murder to cover up an offence. It would also meet the concern of the Home Secretary for better protection for the public. Whilst the recommendation was in respect of mentally disordered offenders, it would seem equally appropriate in any case of a violent dangerous offender.

Dr D I ACRES, Benfleet, Essex
The writer was a member of the Butler Committee, 1973-75

Investors care for environment

Sir: In your commentary on Anita and Gordon Roddick's decision not to take The Body Shop private (5 March) you imply that there are inevitably conflicts between environmental responsibility and shareholders' interests.

This need not be the case. In a recent survey of their views, 71 per cent of our shareholders either agreed or strongly

agreed with the proposition that the company's mission "is important for them as a shareholder".

Happily enough for us, 59 per cent agreed or strongly agreed that the company's values represented "one of the major reasons" they invested in the first place.

Dr DAVID WHEELER, General Manager, Ethical Audit, The Body Shop International, Littlehampton.

Stakeholders in housing

Sir: Your leader (6 March) suggests we have a choice between investment in home ownership and the flexibility of rental. One can have the best of both worlds.

I have lived in co-operative housing associations for four years. For a £1 investment I have become an equal shareholder in the co-op which owns the flat I live in. Collectively the members of the co-op manage the properties, so we have control over maintenance, lettings, development of new schemes, and other projects. This kind of property ownership is open to all, regardless of income.

We retain the flexibility of rental. One can move without

incurring the costs of surveyors, estate agents and solicitors.

In managing the properties, members develop business skills that people in other forms of social housing may never have an opportunity to acquire. We are "stakeholders".

Regular management meetings lead to a genuine community spirit which is otherwise approaching extinction in British towns and cities. An African proverb suggests "it takes a village to raise a child". I have seen children with the confidence and social skills that come from being raised in such a community.

And finally, no one in co-operative housing subscribes to the nonsense that inflation in housing costs is a good thing.

IAN EILOART, Brighton

Unpresidented

Sir: Tristan Garol-Jones (6 March) argues against republicanism on the assumption that a republic necessarily implies a president. Both a strong executive president and a ceremonial figurehead would, he suggests, be unsatisfactory. But why would we need a president at all? I have no difficulty in envisaging a republic headed by a prime minister.

JOHN SMURTHWAITE, Leeds

Augustine's reply

Sir: In his letter "Christians did not invent morality" (5 March) Professor Maurice Pope would have quoted St Augustine (*Augustine Opera*, 1, 12) – "The very thing which is now called the Christian religion, really was known to the ancients, nor was it wanting at any time from the beginning of the human race up to the time Christ came in the flesh; from which time the true religion, which has previously existed, began to be called Christian, and this in our days is the Christian religion, not as having been wanting in former times, but as having in later times received that name."

JOHN DANSE, Penarth, Glamorgan

DAVID AARONOVITCH Mid-Cliff crisis



The outward signs of male mid-life crisis are far more apparent than the luckless sufferer usually imagines. There's the man in his early forties who turns up at the body-piercers workshop and asks to look at the catalogue, pausing wistfully at the page on nipples and navels. Or the fellow whose hair, thinning fore, suddenly sports pigtail aff. Leather trousers on a sagging rear, waistcoats patterned with nudes from the Sistine Chapel, a gleaming Harley-Davidson (plus discreet mounting ladder) and a habit of coquettishly inviting young women to guess his age – these are all signs of an aging chap in trouble – and just begging to be ridiculed.

Who better to embody this absurdity than that former clean teen idol, Sir Cliff Richard, in his determination to metamorphose into the violent and smouldering Heathcliff, in the forthcoming musical adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*? Not since Florence Foster-Jenkins made the ultimate vanity appearance at Carnegie Hall (paid for by her dotting but tone-deaf husband) has the cruel sect of journalistic assassins anticipated such enjoyable bloodletting. It is irresistible.

And since I am no better than anyone else, I cannot resist. Are we, I wonder, to be treated to Heathcliff gesticulating the wedding of Catherine to Edgar Linton and bursting into a bitterly ironic rendition of "Congratulations"? Or perhaps silencing his tortured lover with the vicious misogynistic "Living Doll"? A long period of silent rain-splattered necking and bodice-groping could be followed by "It's so funny (that we don't talk any more)".

Cliff as Heathcliff seems as incongruous as, say, Hugh Grant playing Falstaff or Jodie Foster's Lady Bracknell (eyes flick up, soft drawl emerges from side of mouth: A haughty snarl). Surely the man ought to realise that you cannot be one thing for most of your life, and then expect to be allowed to become another. That is the message which most of us who pontificate about these things are sending to Sir Cliff. For God's sake, act your age – be yourself.

But which self is a middle-

aged man to be? I am a decade and a half younger than Cliff, but one morning last week I woke up with a feeling of terrible panic. My chest felt tight and my mouth was completely dry. It was like those dreams of childhood where it is Christmas Day, and there are no presents or the nightmares of adolescence in which you are about to enter the examination and realise that you have done no revision. Except I was awake and the one thought in my head was: "How the hell did I get to this age? Where has it all gone?" Sometime in the night, Death – for the first time (but presumably not the last) – had paid me a visit.

I am not looking for sympathy here. If you're older than me, you've been through it; if younger, well – you have it to come.

But I understand very well why Cliff wants to be Heathcliff. He has spent a lifetime being civilised, wholesome, decent and dentally perfect. A model of effortless self-restraint. But something elemental – mortality – is hard upon his heels and now he wants to run to the hills, hunt with the wolves, eat red, raw meat and to howl. "Within all of us," he snarls, "is the potential to kill, to hate, to do bad things." To leave teabags in the sink.

This urge to be less restrained can be seen in many men. Two years ago, some folk thought they had spotted a character change in the author and broadcaster Melvyn Bragg. Previously rather bland and accommodating, he had turned nasty and impatient, growling at guests on his radio show and writing dirty stories. Bragg was reinventing himself.

And I like the new version. Bragg the Bastard has more edge than Melvyn the Mellifluous, and generates more light. He made an adjustment and it worked. Very often it does, and it certainly beats the more pathetic attempts of men to defeat their mid-life blues, such as dumping their wives and kids.

So, Sir Cliff, the good news is that I would like to join you on the moor. The bad news is that I want to play Cathy.

QUOTE UNQUOTE

I had a nasty moment in Lagos when I thought I was going to explode just from my own internal juices and organs, which would have looked very bad in a pale suit on camera – Clive Anderson, television personality, after eating a doggy meal in Nigeria

New Labour remains eminently beatable, especially by a Prime Minister whose speciality is nail-biting finishes in which he comes from behind to win – Sir Charles Powell, who was Margaret Thatcher's private secretary at 10 Downing Street

If Tony Blair is a One-Nation Tory, then I am a monkey's uncle – Kenneth Clarke, Chancellor of the Exchequer

Royalty is paid to be dignified. MPs are paid to say what they think. Neither are earning their money – George Walden, Conservative MP

There is no debauchery on the planet like that of certain jazz people – Jools Holland, jazz musician

Like pandas, some hereditary peers deserve preservation on aesthetic grounds: those aristocrats, hairy of buttock and small of brain, whose gaze could open an oyster at 50 paces, merit a place in any Red Data Book of endangered primates – Steve Jones, professor of genetics

I have long been of the view that a little inflation does you good – Lord McAlpine, former Conservative party treasurer

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) and include a daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

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سكاي نيوز

PROFILE: Senator Robert Dole

He's sure to win his party's nomination. But what does Bob Dole stand for? Ummm, well ... Rupert Cornwell reports

The first thing to know about Bob Dole, senior senator from Kansas and overwhelming favourite to win the Republican nomination to face Bill Clinton this autumn, is that when you meet him, you must proffer your left hand, not your right. If you make that mistake, he will turn, quickly but slightly awkwardly, and stretch out his left hand. Too late, you notice that the right hand, clenched around a protruding pen, is useless. The pen is there in part politely to deter people like you, in part because if he ever let go, the hand would spout uncontrollably.

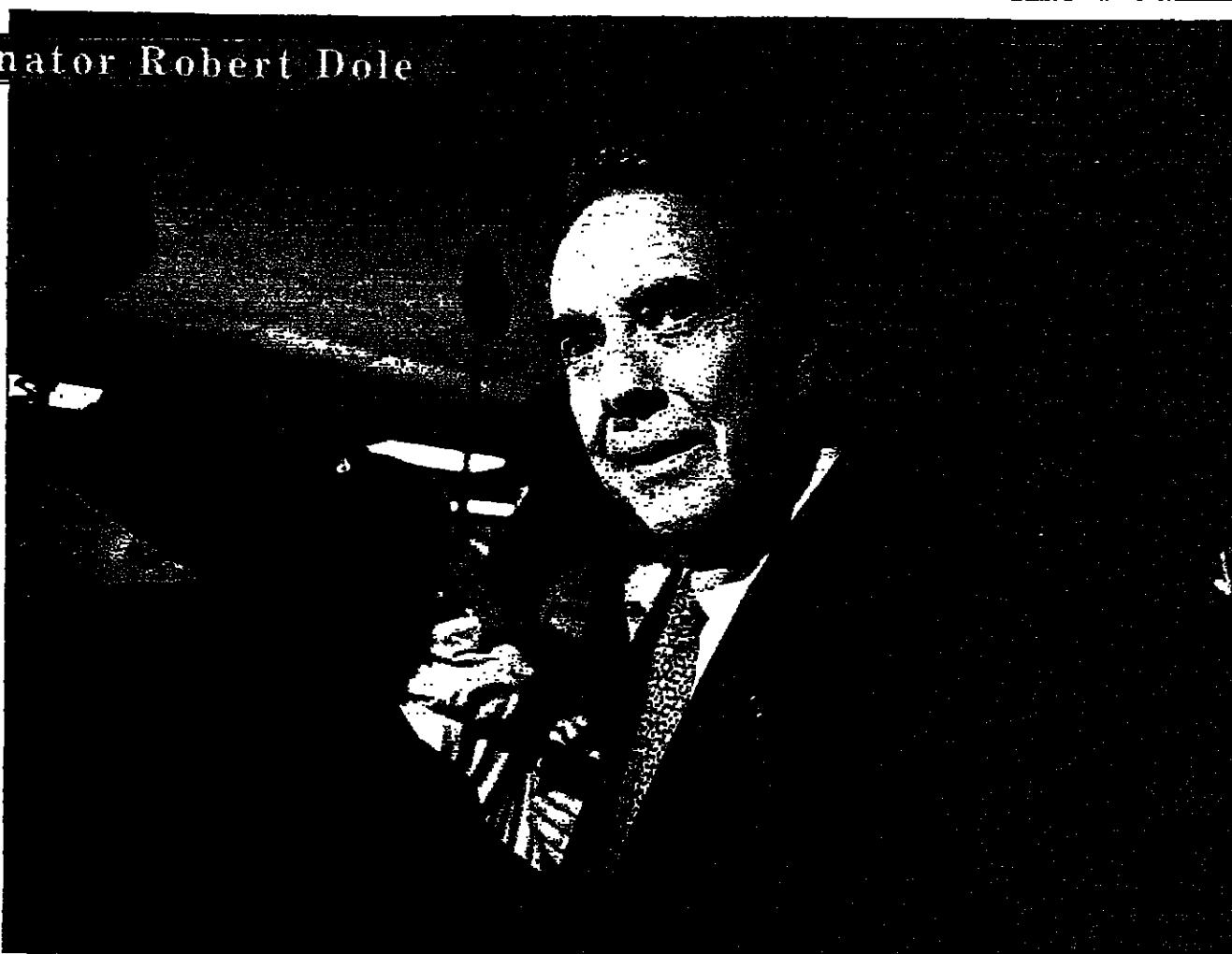
For half a century, Bob Dole has lived like that, ever since a German shell smashed into a young US army lieutenant in northern Italy on 14 April 1945, wrecking his shoulder and arm, damaging several vertebrae, and leaving him half-paralysed. Rehabilitation took three years. Most men, less persevering by nature, would have remained invalids for life, but Dole's sheer determination prevailed. Today, that same grit has carried him - at 72 years of age, when the healthiest of men are well into merited retirement - to the brink of, arguably, the most gruelling job on earth - the presidency of the United States.

The incongruities do not end there. An ideologically driven Republican revolution has swept Congress, yet the Republican poised to seek the White House is the least revolutionary of men, a pragmatist to his fingertips, a gradualist who believes that politics is the art of the possible. At a time of huge public distrust of career politicians, when outsiders are the rage, the Republicans are about to send forth the ultimate insider.

The US presidency is supposed to require vision; Bob Dole, by his own admission, has none. His personal story is truly heroic, but he hates to dwell on it; after 35 years in Congress, a dozen of them as his party's leader in the Senate, he is acknowledged as a master legislator, but he dares not mention his achievements. Indeed, in the bully pulpit of the White House, he promises to be tongue-tied, or worse. His stump speech is genuinely excruciating: staccato salvoes of fatitudes, random clichés, drawn like numbered lottery balls from a bag. "This is Mexico. I wanna talk about being President," he will say in his rasping machine-gun of a voice, swallowing vowels by the throatful. "Mexico's a great country. Greatest country on earth. Gotta make it better still."

How, you wonder, can a man in politics so long, who has run for president in 1980 and 1988, still not have learnt to sell himself? Part is surely the Kansan in him, the dour plainsman for whom understatement is a way of life, and humour by its very nature an extravagance. Dole can be very funny, but his jokes are mostly stalling, bleak and mocking, either of himself or others. "Yeah, I got elected president once. President of Iowa," he says, apropos of his initial but worthless win in his 1988 bid for the White House.

This time, his aides have touted a "new Dole", soft, fuzzy and reassuring. But the only real difference is that this time the famous temper, the "mean streak", has been kept under control. Dole will never be a national cheerleader. His smile is still that of an undertaker. "Dole 96", runs a fictional campaign bumper-sticker, "A Dark Man for Dark Times".



Bob Dole campaigning in New Hampshire: his smile is that of an undertaker

Photograph: Brian Harris

One final mission, objectives unknown

The other reason that Dole can't make a decent speech is because he doesn't believe it's necessary. In the Dole view of the universe, the presidency is not to be won by glib promises and florid words (indeed, Newt Gingrich's omniscient psychobabble drives him insane) but by deeds. His selling points are experience and judgement, a "safe pair of hands", as the British like to say. If Dole can seem defensive and resentful, it is because he has been passed over so often, forced to watch as Republicans he considered less deserving claimed the supreme prize.

is politics pure and simple, an almost ascetic existence in which weekend relaxation is an appearance on the Sunday morning talk-shows (on which he is the most frequent guest in network history), or a spell on the exercise bike in the living-room.

Elizabeth, his wife of 20 years and a former cabinet secretary under presidents Reagan and Bush, is as busy and as addicted to work as himself. The couple still live in the one-and-a-half bedroom flat in the Watergate building that Dole bought when his first marriage ended in divorce in 1972. An evening

ident and he cannot answer. "One last mission," he calls his candidacy, employing a metaphor of war and manifest destiny. But mission for what? Dole hasn't the faintest idea. "Haven't thought," he told the author Richard Ben Kramer last year. "If I get elected at my age... I'm not going anywhere. It's not an agenda. I'm just gonna serve my country." If Americans want sweep and uplift from a president, Dole is not their man.

But there are moments, rare moments, when the guard comes down and you glimpse the man beneath. It happened in the Senate as Dole tried in vain to prevent American troops being sent to Bosnia, warning of brave but fearful young men facing the terrible risks of combat - just like the 21-year-old Bobby Joe Dole half a century ago - but this time in an unnecessary cause. It happened too at the funeral in 1994 of Richard Nixon, another politician of a hard-scrabble upbringing who had climbed back from defeats and disgrace.

Dole delivered one of the funeral orations that day, and quoted words of Nixon that could have been his own motto: "The greatest sadness is not to try and fail but to fail to try." Maybe they also reminded him of his own childhood in the Dust Bowl and Depression days of Russell, Kansas, in the Thirties, and the constant admonition of his mother, Bina: "Can't never could do anything." Normally so disciplined and composed, Dole's voice cracked and that April Day in California, he wept before the television cameras of the world. You watched, transfixed and disbelieving. Something similar on the campaign trail, and he might at last turn tedium into passion - and prove that an old man's mission has a purpose.

An ideologically driven Republican revolution has swept Congress; yet the Republican poised to seek the White House is the least revolutionary of men

There was Ronald Reagan in 1980, and above all George Bush, the patrician Yale who bested him eight years ago - hence his abhorrence of Steve Forbes, another East Coast rich boy, touting nonsensical nostrums like a flat tax, for whom life has come too easy.

For Dole, of course, nothing has come easy, starting with the recovery of the use of his own body after the wounds of 1945. He is a creature of political Washington, yet is physically unable to participate in many of its favoured relaxations - tennis, golf, even the power lunch. He cannot cut a steak or tie shoelaces (hence the shiny black loafers he always wears). "A broken fingernail," he has said, "is a minor crisis." Perforce, his life

at home (once a fortnight, on average; these campaign days, never) is a pizza and a rented video. The Doles have an apartment in Florida which they sometimes visit. Most nights, though, are Senate business, fundraisers or party functions in the four corners of the United States.

Nobody understands the mechanics of politics better - the money that greases its wheels, the art of putting together a majority, and the law of a favour given, a favour returned. Certainly, over the decades, no one has sat before more helpings of rubber chicken, every one of them to further his ultimate ambition.

But ask Bob Dole why he wants to be pres-

The high price of a chair at Oxford

Andrew Brown asks if Balliol College should accept a tainted professorship

"Honour without money, is just a disease," wrote Jean Racine, and the University of Oxford knows what he meant. It has been assiduously raising funds for years, from Americans, from Rupert Murdoch, and even from the grandchildren of Nazi industrialists. That is where the trouble started three years ago. Dr Gert-Rudolf Flick offered a large sum, supposedly £350,000 a year for five years, to establish a Flick Professorship of European Thought. For most newspaper readers, the name Flick means only incredible wealth and divorce bills. In the tabloids, he is known as the "Muck" Flick, whose wife, Maya, successfully appealed against the scarcely credible stinginess of a £9m divorce settlement. One can see how a woman who once gave £500,000 to the Hammersmith hospital might feel insulted when asked to live on so little.

For students of the Holocaust, however, Flick was also the family name behind one of the largest industrial combines of Nazi Germany, in whose factories perhaps 30,000 enslaved labourers died. Dr Flick's grandfather, Friedrich, was sentenced to seven years for this after the war, of which he served three, without expressing remorse; and most of his fortune was confiscated. There remained enough, however, to provide the foundation for a new and even larger fortune, so that by the time he died in 1972 he was once more rich beyond imagination.

David Selbourne, the political philosopher, has urged Balliol, his "old college", to find the "moral courage" to renounce the gift. Yet the ethics committee of Oxford University has concluded that the money used to found the chair does not derive from objectionable practices.

They would, wouldn't they, retort the attackers of Balliol, and launch into ever more inventive parlour games. You would have thought it hard to improve on the Rupert Murdoch Professor of Communication Studies, Jean ("dropped") Aitchison, who has just completed delivering the Reith Lectures. But how about a Josef Stalin Chair of Minority Rights, or a Michael Howard Chair of Penal Policy?

What particularly offends the opponents of Mr Flick is exactly the factor that extracts the money from rich patrons in the first place: the fact that their names will live forever, gradually acquiring a lustre that obliterates all memories of the source of the fortune. But this is a process that has been going on for as long as there have been rich men and civilisation. All the great fortunes of the ancient world derived from slavery: Maecenas, who gave his name to a rich man's patronage of the arts, would hardly have satisfied a modern ethics committee.

The great 19th-century philanthropists - Carnegie, Rockefeller and even Ford - may now be remembered for the libraries and foundations, but they made their money off sweat and labour in appalling conditions. At some stage, surely, the good that a man does by spending his fortune must outweigh the evil that his ancestors did in getting and defending it. Many of the great British fortunes of the 18th and 19th centuries were founded on the slave trade, or on the exploitation of India; we no longer hold their heirs responsible for this.

Christina Hardymen, editor of the *Oxford Magazine*, points out that almost all the colleges were themselves founded as acts of reparation by powerful men with a great deal on their consciences. In the Middle Ages, when religion and education were almost synonymous, to found a college was a more direct means of atonement than it may seem nowadays.

The Catholic tradition of endowing masses to be said for your soul simultaneously added to the splendour of the family name and confessed its need for forgiveness. Fr Herbert McCabe, a Dominican philosopher at Blackfriars in Oxford, once said that All Souls, where Masses were to be said for the soldier at Agincourt, is "the largest war memorial in the world".

Perhaps Mr Flick's real problem is not that people are worried about the source of his money but about its destination. The establishment of a Chair of European Thought doesn't, somehow, seem to make up for the sufferings that may have gone into establishing the fortune that endowed it. But that is not because we have grown morally more exquisite than preceding generations; it is because we have lost faith in our culture.

Change our number plate? RU MAD?

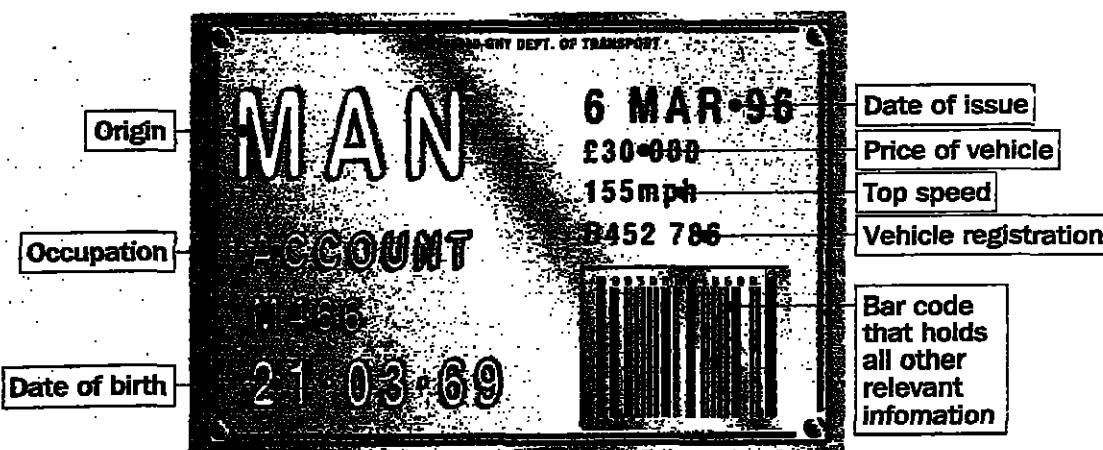
No matter how we register cars, the anorak element will remain, says Jonathan Glancey

Pick up a copy of *Exchange and Mart*, any copy, and turn to the voluminous used-car section. Under the makers' names - Ford, Jaguar, Mercedes-Benz, Toyota, Vauxhall - the small ads scream for attention under the imprint of ink-encased letters: "E-reg, tidy motor, fish genuine gear", "G-reg, immaculate, always garaged, no canvassers", "K-reg, high mileage, hence price, no time-wasters".

This alphabet soup spills down the columns of cars for sale, for the British car buyer, and motor trade, is clearly obsessed with registration plates. We scour the classified ads knowing our Fs from our Es, if not our Ps from our Qs. Q, by the way, is applied to cars bought abroad, while P may well be the last in the current series of alphabet-prefix British registration plates.

The Department of Transport, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) and the car industry are currently discussing the future of the number plate. From August 1997, it is likely that number plates will change on a quarterly rather than on the present annual basis. The reason is simply that the annual change in registration letters, which has taken place since January 1963 (shifting to August in 1967), has encouraged an upsurge of sales in a single month to the detriment of business during the rest of the year.

Buyers, it seems, must have the latest registration. Why buy an N-reg car on 31 July when you can improve your fellow cul-de-sac residents with a P-reg the very next day? This might sound silly, but when has our relationship with the car ever been rational? In the uncertain waters of the second-hand car business, the difference between



Road to lunacy? This hypothetical number plate lacks mother's maiden name but little else

an N and a P is a gulf in our imagination as wide as the English Channel. The former may be in better condition than the latter, yet, in most cases, it will be cheaper: all logic goes out of the window where registration plates are concerned.

That this is true is proved by the extremely silly prices car owners will pay for "personalised" plates. DVLA (the Swansea-based licensing authority) makes a small fortune for the Government by auctioning used-vehicle registration numbers at venues throughout Britain, to date, DVLA auctions have raised £100m, with individual bidders paying up to £20,000 for plates such as JG1.

To most of us, this is a form of madness; bad enough being asked to pin a name-tag to our lapels at a conference without having to tell the world who we are when driving home. There

are, however, many motorists only too keen to manifest their monicker - pop stars, DJs, property developers and advertising execs only the loudest among them.

Most of us do not care one way or another, or not unless we are landed with a plate that makes us look even sillier than a pop star; there are some that include words like MOO or MUD, suitable for dairy farmers, perhaps, but surely not for us smart urban professionals (who would do better with SUP or YUP).

Even so, there are number plate games many of us (those with the child still in us) enjoy playing when driving abroad. In Italy, for example, you can keep passengers awake by asking them to play the guess-where-the-car-in-front-has-come-from game. NA stands for Naples, SI for Sienna, VE for Verona and so on (cars registered in

the capital are less discreet, boasting a fully spelt-out ROMA). This is diverting, not least because we can construct fantasy lives about the Veronese or Neapolitan families swerving across our path in a foot-on-the-floor Fiat Cinquecento. We can learn to raise our fingers in crude response as Italian drivers do, and shout "typical Neapolitan" or "typical Roman", even if we have no idea what a typical Neapolitan or Roman is like.

The French opt, as one would expect, for a rational system of car registration based on the logical division of post-revolutionary France into geometric departments. Here, numbers rather than names are the rule - we know a Parisian by the code 75.

We tell Bavarians from Westphalians from stylish, information-packed German number plates, while

in the United States, we are offered a succinct character profile of individual states even before we cross the border - Florida, as many license plates brag, is the "Sunshine State" (promising lazy, hazy, crazy summer days) and Texas is the "Lone Star State", a law unto itself. Rhode Island plates carry the scary impression "Live free or die".

Run-of-the-mill British plates may appear to be arcane, yet they tell policemen, motor traders and the sad sort of person who collects street-lamp numbers where a car originally came from - NKX and PPP means the car is from Berkshire, while ABH is a car from Buckinghamshire. But you would never guess.

Now that our system of registration is about to change, what sort of number plates might we opt for? We could choose a pretty system like the Italians. Alternatively, we could plump for a supermarket-style bar code. Caught up in the world of instantly accessible information, we might go the whole hog and choose plates that tell the world who we are in no uncertain terms - name, city of origin (us and the car), occupation and blood group in case of accident. Or we could, as Americans already have (at extra cost), decide on unique scripted plates that tell it like it is: "I'm Mandy, fly me" is one I've seen in Texas, but I wouldn't be surprised to read some day in London's West End: "Let's do lunch", or in Leicestershire: "I'm a big cheese", or in Blackpool: "I've seen the lights." This might sound potty, but it would make each car memorable and easy to recover, while scanning the ads in *Exchange and Mart* would be a good deal more fun than it is now.

PLEASE HELP A LITTLE DONKEY IN DISTRESS



Cabbage has suffered during her 25 years. She is thin and, possibly as a result of a hard blow to her head, she is blind in one eye, deaf and must be led to her food and water. She has been put into foal now as she had been running with stallions who had bullied her. Cabbage had a massive abscess on her shoulder and spent time at our donkey hospital.

Now her quality of life is improving every day and her new-found friend is proving to be an inseparable companion. Please can you help us to care for Cabbage and donkeys like her. Being such gentle, placid creatures they are sadly frequently abused or neglected.

Please Help Us To Help Them

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Devon, EX10 0NU.
Tel: (01395) 578222
Enquiries to Dr E. D. Svendsen, M.B.E.



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American jobs growth sends shares prices into dive

TOM STEVENSON and DAVID USBORNE

Shares dived in London and New York yesterday as higher-than-expected US jobs data sparked hopes of further base rate cuts. The FT-SE 100 index of leading stocks shrugged off yesterday's quarter-point reduction in the cost of borrowing, taking its lead from a panicky opening in New York.

At one point the FT-SE 100 index was 72 points lower but it regained some of its poise to-

wards the end of the session, closing 47.9 points off at 3,710.3. The day's loss means the index is now only 21 points less than at the beginning of the year.

Tumbling share prices took dealers by surprise. Mike Butten, a trader at Panmure Gordon, said: "I can't remember having seen an interest rate reduction and the market down 60 points. It's all about America, of course, but I wouldn't be surprised to see the market better in a week's time."

Others took the view, however, that the strengthening of the US economy had given European banks less scope for rate cuts. There was speculation that had Kenneth Clarke left the quarter-point cut until Monday he would not have felt able to reduce rates.

Fears that yesterday's cut may be the last for some time pushed the 10-year gilt lower, driving the yield 21 basis points higher to 8.06 per cent, the highest for almost five months. Wall Street was briefly sent

reeling on news of a giant leap in job numbers in the US economy in February, which dashed hopes of a further cut in interest rates by the Federal Reserve.

The statistics initially had a devastating effect on the Dow Jones industrial average, which plunged by as much as 116 points in the first half hour of yesterday's trading. The index later stabilised somewhat and was off by around 70 points at the lunch hour.

The biggest beating was taken by the bond market, how-

ever, with the Treasury 30-year long bond down by 3 points in early trading. Even by noon, the 30-year bonds were still off by a sobering 2.5 points while the yield has climbed steeply from 6.47 per cent to 6.71 per cent.

Sparking it all was the report from the US Labor Department showing a net rise of 705,000 non-farm jobs in February, far exceeding most analysts' expectations. It was the biggest single monthly gain in 13 years. The overall unemployment rate fell to 5.5 per cent.

The report in effect torpedoed the notion popular with many analysts over recent weeks that the expansion in the US economy had run its course and that a period of recession might even have been in prospect. It was that scenario that had kept hopes alive that the Federal Reserve might have made one more cut in interest rates at its next policy meeting on 26 March.

By contrast, an unemployment rate of 5.5 per cent is likely now to stir renewed fears of

a return of inflationary pressures in the US economy as employers begin to face difficulties in maintaining workforce numbers. Against that kind of background any monetary easing is seen as most unlikely.

The market jolt raised some fears that the Dow Jones index, which has set 16 record highs this year already, might at last be due for a correction or even a disastrous reverse reminiscent of the collapse of 1987.

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Lloyd's names brace themselves for the reckoning

JOHN EISENHAMMER and PETER RODGERS

More than 34,000 Lloyd's names world-wide are bracing themselves this weekend for the first estimates of how much it will cost to end their eight-year nightmare with the troubled insurance market.

Lloyd's last night embarked on the biggest mailing exercise in its history, sending out world-wide the individual bills that names have been waiting for, fearing, for many months.

A roll-call of famous names, including Virginia Wade and Henry Cooper, the actress Susan Hampshire and Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, will be among those looking to the doorman on Monday morning for the bulky package, full of advice and warnings, and the vital figure of what Lloyd's pledges is the final bill to end it all.

About 9,000 names face paying the maximum £100,000, over and above losing all their funds deposited at Lloyd's. A further 4,000 will need to raise cash sums of up to £100,000 as the cost of covering all potential liabilities from the old policies that Lloyd's is handing off into a special re-insurance vehicle, Equitas. Lloyd's stressed yesterday that these are estimated bills; the final Equitas premium statements will be sent out in late May.

Lloyd's chairman, David Rowland, urged names in an accompanying letter to bite the bullet

and accept this as the price for drawing a line under the traumas of the past. There will not be another settlement plan. "If we miss this opportunity, the consequences will be very serious. None of us should be under any illusion that any alternative proposals offer greater comfort," he said.

But several names' action group leaders, who had received their bills earlier, warned that the cost for the hardest-hit and most litigious names is still too high.

The Lloyd's nightmare	
1987 Profit	£509m
1988 Loss	£510m
1989 Loss	£1.9bn
1990 Loss	£2.3bn
1991 Loss	£2bn
1992 Loss	£1.2bn
1993 Est profit	£1bn
1994 Est profit	£1bn
1995 Est profit	£888m

"As a result of what we know now, it is clear the amount of money on the table is insufficient. We need another £400m to make Equitas fly," said John Mays, chairman of the Merrett action group.

He is among a deputation of names' leaders urging the Department of Trade and Industry to bring pressure to bear on Lloyd's to find more than the £2.8bn of credits and debt relief

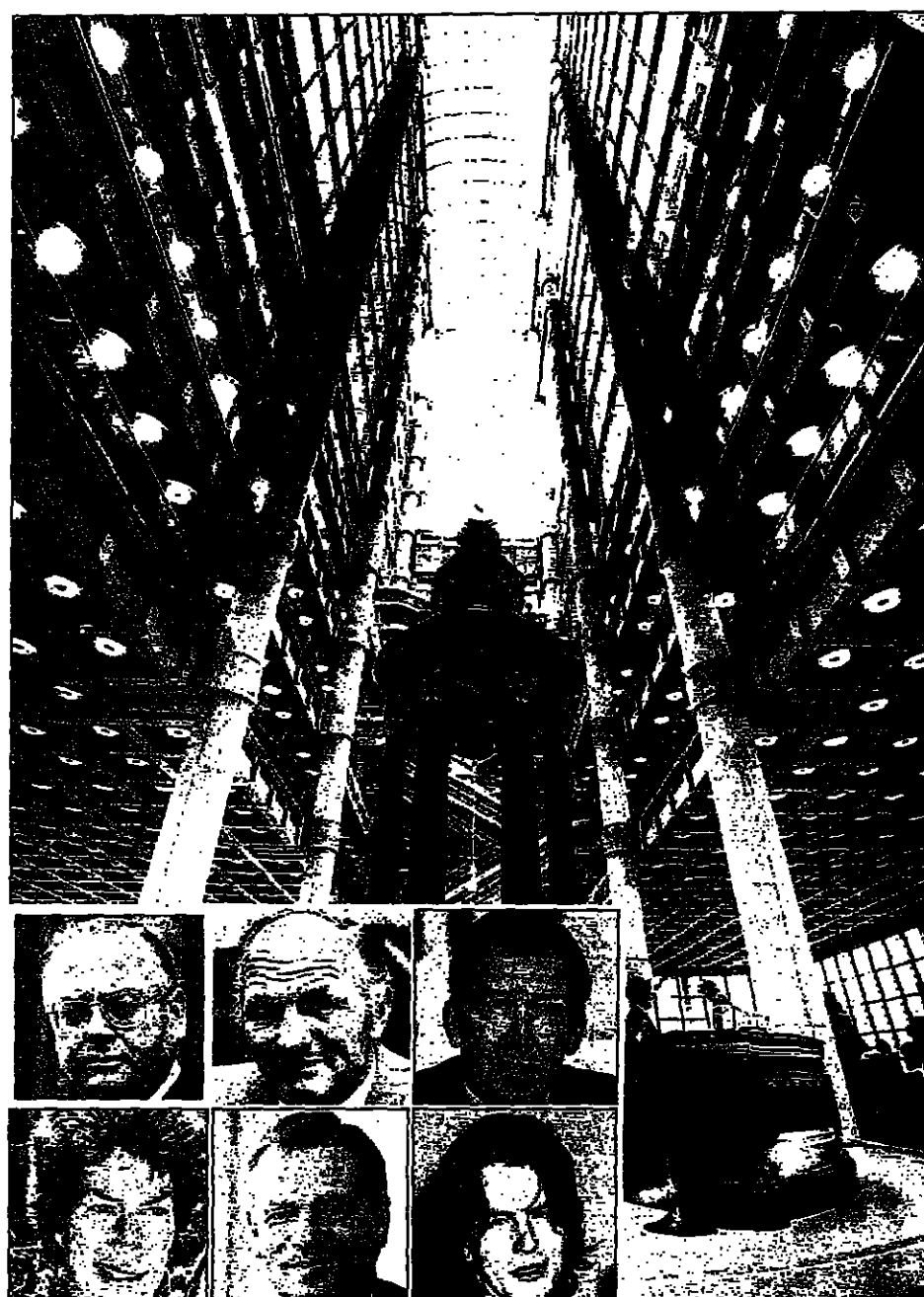
that the society is using to reduce the cost to names of settling. Representatives of the names believe that without another £350m-£500m added into the pot to reduce, and perhaps halve the size of the maximum bill to £50,000, there is a serious risk that the settlement will be voted down when it is put to the market as a whole in July. Names believe it would cost only about £350m to halve the cap.

As well as shrinking the £100,000 cap, which affects 9,000 heavily loss-making names, there are hopes that additional funds can be found to help out members of the hardest-hit syndicates and to increase the sums set aside for hardship relief. "Either Lloyd's needs to find more funds from market professionals, or with the DTI it must agree to reduce the very harsh reserving requirements for Equitas. Either would ease the cost to names," Mr Mays said.

Anthony Nelson, the DTI minister responsible for the insurance market, has been told by names groups that the funding of Equitas is far too conservative and is mopping up money that could be better used in improving the terms for names.

Lloyd's has been hinting privately that it expects to be able to increase the offer to names by the time the final bills go out, even if it means raising a loan in the market.

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Awaiting the postman: Among the illustrious names anticipating their fate are (clockwise from top left) David Ashby MP, the former boxer Henry Cooper, Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, Virginia Wade the ex-tennis star, Lord Archer, and John Taylor of the group Duran Duran. The main picture is of Lloyd's building in central London

ICL to sack a further 1,000 workers

MARY FAGAN, Industrial Correspondent

ICL, the UK computer group owned by Fujitsu of Japan, has embarked on a radical restructuring involving more job losses in an effort to return the company to the black. The changes include the demerger of its personal computer operations throughout Europe and the sale of D2D, its electronics manufacturing arm.

The group will also cut up to 1,000 jobs in its remaining businesses in addition to 1,300 implemented or announced over the last 12 months.

Keith Todd, chief executive, said ICL was still intent on re-listing on the London Stock Exchange, originally intended to take place last year. He said: "Flotation will happen. I am committed, the board is committed and the shareholders are committed. The only question is when."

"We already have sound revenue growth but my overriding priority now is to increase profit and maximise shareholder value."

Mr Todd also said that ICL planned a £200m rights issue, underwritten by Fujitsu, to strengthen the capital base and invest in the core activities of systems, software and services.

Last year ICL slumped to a pre-tax loss of £188m, after exceptional charges, from a profit of £28.4m in 1994. The combined operating losses of the personal computer and electronics manufacturing op-

erations were £57m. The losses, announced yesterday, were in spite of a 17 per cent increase in revenues to £3.1bn and due largely to squeezed profit margins and fierce competition.

Under the restructuring plan, the design and manufacture of ICL personal computers will be demerged and combined with Fujitsu's own PC business, with ICL retaining a small stake. The operations to be demerged employ 2,000 people in several European factories and had a turnover last year of £650m. Initially at least, PCs made by the new combined business will continue to bear the joint Fujitsu/ICL brand.

The electronics manufacturing arm employs 2,200 people in the UK - principally in Manchester and Stoke-on-Trent - and has a turnover of about £350m.

ICL is seeking a "partner" to buy the majority and will retain a stake of less than 20 per cent. It already manufactures under contract to rival computer firms and will continue to do so for ICL once it is sold.

Mr Todd said: "ICL is now a much clearer proposition - a computer system and service company. We are focussing ICL firmly on its core business and will accelerate the profit recovery."

The dramatic shakeout comes less than three months after Mr Todd moved into the job from the previous post of finance director. His accession followed the appointment of his predecessor, Sir Peter Bonfield, as chief executive of BT.

Halifax BC W float

Black Friday in the boardroom: Shake-up at the retailer, darkening clouds over Italian airline, and a surprising departure at the conglomerate

Quarmby checks out from Sainsbury's

NIGEL COPE

David Quarmby, a senior director with Sainsbury's, is leaving the supermarket group after being passed over in the group's boardroom re-shuffle in January. According to the terms of his contract Mr Quarmby could be entitled to compensation of up to £1m, although Sainsbury said this was unlikely.

Mr Quarmby, 54, was deputy managing director and has been with the company for 11 years. He is leaving by mutual consent to pursue other interests. "There are a number of options I am considering," he said yesterday.

Prior to Sainsbury's boardroom shake-up, Mr Quarmby had been number three in Sainsbury's hierarchy behind chairman David Sainsbury and deputy chairman Tom Vyner. However, following the appointment of Dino Adriano as chief executive designate, Mr Quarmby's role became marginalised. He will not be re-



David Quarmby: Role became marginalised

placed and his responsibilities for strategy and the provision of services to the group will be divided between Mr Sainsbury and finance director Rosemary Thorne.

Last year Mr Quarmby received a total of £450,000 including bonus and pension payments. He was on a two-year rolling contract. However Sainsbury's said it was unlikely that Mr Quarmby would re-

ceive the maximum amount. "Some compensation will be payable reflecting the mutually agreed status of his departure," a spokesman said. Mr Quarmby also holds 63,330 shares which at yesterday's share price - down 6p at 379p - were worth £240,000. He has options over a further 377,570 shares awarded at an average price of 339p.

Mr Quarmby joined Sainsbury in 1984 as distribution director. In 1988 he was appointed joint managing director responsible for non-trading activities.

His departure was unexpected. Andrew Fowler, food retail analyst at brokers UBS said: "It is a surprise but I don't think it will have any real impact. It is a bit of a storm in a teacup." Analysts now expect an external appointment to become chief executive of the US business. This includes the Sainsbury supermarket group as well as the group's stake in Giant, the Washington and Baltimore chain.

RUSSELL HOTTEN

The crisis at Italy's flagship airline, Alitalia, deepened last night after the chairman angrily resigned, warning that the company's survival was at risk after failure to tackle strikes and debts.

The departure of Renato Riviero, which follows the dismissal last year of the managing director, suggests that the tough cost-cutting strategy at the company is likely to be put on hold.

Europe's private airlines, such as British Airways, have been campaigning against continued state subsidies for their rivals and will be watching whether it means more aid is pumped in.

Reforming Alitalia was seen as a test case for Italy's bloated public sector, which has long been the subject of political interference and concessions to the powerful unions.

Mr Riviero and the former managing director, Roberto Schisano, joined Alitalia in 1994 - the former from IBM

and the latter from Texas Instruments.

In a letter to an Italian financial newspaper, Mr Riviero said he had lost the confidence of the airline's owner - IRI, the state industrial holding giant. He called IRI "inert, mute and passive" in the face of Alitalia's problems. IRI's attitude showed the "tradition of compromise which our country seems unable to renounce," Mr Riviero said.

"I have resigned as president of Alitalia to put an end to an unsustainable and paradoxical situation that was created in the relationship between me and the majority shareholder Istituto per la Ricostruzione Industriale Spa," he said.

Last year ex-managing director Roberto Schisano was dismissed in a row over pay negotiations with the company's unions. Mr Riviero's departure seems to have been triggered by the appointment two weeks ago of a new managing director, Domenico Compella, who has said he wants to avoid "trau-

matic" job cuts at the airline. Mr Riviero painted a bleak picture of Alitalia's problems in his letter. "Alitalia is a firm which produces at high cost while its product is not recognised to be of high quality. Services on offer are not competitive while the world market is becoming ever more demanding and aggressive," he said.

Alitalia needed to make annual savings of £600m a year (£256m) in order to restore its financial health. "There is no way round this problem," Mr Riviero said.

The company's problems have been exacerbated by a string of strikes called by unions to protest at tough restructuring plans unveiled by Mr Schisano last year.

Trade unions have threatened another eight-hour strike for March 12, with management and workers due to meet early next week to try to break the deadlock. However, Mr Riviero said the airline's management had not been backed up by IRI in its dealings with the unions.

TOM STEVENSON, City Editor

BAT lost the highly regarded head of its financial services division yesterday, just two days after the tobacco-to-insurance group announced an overhaul of the Eagle Star and Allied Dunbar operations he had run for the past four years.

A terse statement said George Greener had resigned "by mutual consent" although a company source confirmed that the impetus for the abrupt departure of the 50-year-old main board director had come from the company. Mr Greener is understood not to have another job to go to.

Negotiations regarding his severance pay continue but BAT is thought unlikely to honour the whole of a two-year rolling contract, which saw Mr Greener take home a basic salary of £550,000 in 1994 even before a bonus of £138,000. A compromise payment of about one year's salary is thought likely.

Mr Greener's arrival at BAT in 1991, after 20 years with Mars was greeted with much fanfare and high hopes that his consumer goods marketing expertise could be used to good effect in the group's financial services operations.

Analysts were yesterday baffled by the style of his departure, not least because he had seemed to be a strong proponent of the company's stated strategy of creating greater coherence between Eagle Star and Allied

Dunbar's life and general insurance operations. He had also been instrumental in setting up Threadneedle, BAT's asset management division.

Mr Greener is replaced by Sandy Leitch, currently head of Allied Dunbar. Steve Melcher, chief executive of Eagle Star's EU business, takes the same position at Allied Dunbar, retaining responsibility for Eagle Star's life operations. Clive Coates, Eagle Star's finance director, steps up to head its



George Greener: Departure has surprised analysts

general insurance business. Earlier this week Martin Broughton, BAT's chief executive, heralded a shake-up of the financial services arm and warned of job losses. The life insurance sector has been under pressure to cut costs against flat or falling sales. Allied Dunbar's contribution to group profits fell by more than a quarter last year.

STOCK MARKETS					
Index	Close	Day's change	Change (%)	1995/96 High	1995/96 Low
FTSE 100	3710.30	-47.90	-1.3	3781.30	2954.20
FTSE 250	4252.70	-27.30	-0.6	4280.00	3300.50
FTSE 350	1860.90	-21.40	-1.1	1899.00	1482.40
FT Small Cap	2069.51	-8.50	-0.3	2076.11	1678.61
FT All Share	1539.04	-19.84	-1.3	1564.22	1469.23
New York	5570.15	-71.53	-1.3	5642.42	3832.08
Taiwan	20155.87	+186.72	+1.0	21116.30	14486.40
Hong Kong	11217.79	+23.31	+0.2	11134.48	6967.33
Frankfurt	2469.12	-11.82	-0.5	2501.22	1910.96

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES					
Index	1 Month	3 Month	6 Month	1 Year	Long Bond
UK	6.09	6.09	8.11	8.65	3.23
US	5.22	5.25	6.35	7.24	6.66
Japan	0.50	0.69	3.22	4.13	-
Germany	3.31	3.28	6.53	7.37	7.37

CURRENCIES					
Index	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
\$/£	1.5262	-0.37c	1.5814	£/DM	0.6552
\$/¥	1.5240	-0.85c	1.574	¥/DM	0.6552
DM/£	2.2642	+0.17c	2.2358	DM/¥	1.0568
¥/£	161.505	+¥0.396	144.282	¥/DM	106.625
£/Index	83.7	unch	85.1	Index	95.9

OTHER INDICATORS					
Index	Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago	Index	Yesterday
Oil Brent	18.29	-0.1	15.58	RPI	150.2
Gold	385.5	+1.6	381.5	GDP	107.1
Gold £	258.14	+1.87	240.36	Base Rate	6.00pc

كتاب الأعمال



Final push for a global settlement begins

Lloyd's has at last begun the final push. Much of the talk to date has been pretty theoretical: now the cold, hard figures are on the table and the real bargaining can get under way. Lloyd's never tires of emphasising that these bills are only estimates of how much it will cost every one of the 34,000 names so they can have off all their liabilities from old policies into the special re-insurance company, Equitas. The final bills will go out in late May.

But Lloyd's none the less claims that for the vast majority of names, little change should be expected. Time is very short, as the wodge of documents and letters accompanying the indicative Equitas bills makes plain. The cash must be paid up in July, or the whole, daring enterprise to keep Lloyd's from toppling over the brink will fail.

Lloyd's management, headed by Ron Sandler, the chief executive, has been in overdrive making the case to names up and down the country for accepting the settlement, and describes the plan for ending the nightmare as the least worst of all alternatives.

The seriousness with which Lloyd's has gone about this job has impressed many of the sceptics, and there are plenty of those in the twisted and scarred world of the insurance market. Such is the mistrust, and in some areas, downright hatred, that getting any sort of consensus for survival is a remarkable achievement. None the less, there are signs of one emerging. The chances of pulling off a global settlement of Lloyd's problems are probably now better than 50-50.

However, Lloyd's urgently needs to find up to £300m more money to improve the odds. It could come from brokers or auditors or from a reduction in the very tough re-insuring requirements for Equitas. Every unnecessary extra pound going into Equitas is in effect taken out of the pockets of the names the settlement is meant to benefit.

One of these possibilities, or a combination, would reduce the cost to names of putting the nightmare behind them. For the key group of names that must be won over – the hardest hit who also make up the bulk of the fiercest litigants – the choice between accepting the offer or saying to hell with it remains too close a call for comfort. Some have already been awarded handsome sums by the courts which the offer cannot fund anything like in full.

Lloyd's is hinting privately that more money will be forthcoming: that the final bills for the 9,000 facing the maximum losses should be significantly lower. To be confident of success, it will need to deliver – and it is in the DTT's interest to ensure it does, because the loss of a market as prestigious as Lloyd's would be a severe blow to London.

Some good economic news ... and some bad

Bad news on the British economy – interest rates fell again yesterday. Those who rely on their savings for current income can be for-

given for exasperation over the way mortgage rates receive all the attention in the headlines. Investors in variable interest rate savings have lost up to a fifth of their income over the last year or so and for many, older people that can lead to a painful cut in living standards.

Luckily, the news is not all bad this time round. In recent weeks there have been clear signs that savings institutions have been prepared to take some of the fall in base rates on the chin by cutting their own margins, which have been as high as two percentage points.

Nationwide cut its lending rates and increased its savings rates last month. Bradford & Bingley cut mortgage rates and held savings steady and several other building societies have followed. They can afford to do this because the high margins of the past few years have left them with healthy reserves.

Some look on this largesse as a way of giving the benefits of mutually directly to borrowers and depositors. Without dividends to pay to shareholders, societies can afford to cut their profits by giving a better deal directly to their owners, the customers. But even those that are becoming banks are cutting their margins.

Nevertheless, this may not be enough to prevent the latest fall in base rates leading to some modest further fall in savings rates, even though banks and building societies are likely to absorb some of the reduction. National Savings may be affected, too.

So what should savers do? One reaction would be to grab the highest fixed-rate offers around to lock in today's savings rates. Another would be to accept more risk, perhaps by switching to a five-year corporate bond PEP paying 7.5 per cent or more.

But there are signs in the markets that the fall in the shortest term savings rates could be quite brief, and will probably not be sustained for long – certainly not beyond the election.

Longer term rates for three- to five-year money in the swaps market are already edging up again, in the opposite direction to base rates. Professional investors are focusing on what may happen well beyond the election.

There is no sign yet that longer term savings rates, which are influenced by these money market rates, are moving upwards. But they should certainly be much more stable than base rates and short term savings such as 90 day deposits. There is no need to panic.

Too far, too hard for US market

At risk of sounding like Michael Fish, the investor who asked whether this was the beginning of a stock market hurricane should be advised to relax. These regular little panics in New York are, howev-

er, telling us something: the US market has been pushed too far and too hard and is vulnerable to correction whenever there is any unwelcome news.

The shock over the employment figures in the US was actually rather positive for the economy, in the sense that it was caused by a realisation that growth may be running faster than the consensus believed possible.

That is bad news only in the sense that the markets are now looking towards eventual higher interest rates to cool the expansion. It is a commonplace that investors have felt more comfortable with sluggish growth, low inflation and stable policy than with the prospect of a boom that might be followed by bust. They can no longer be sure that this scenario will last.

The yield curve on bonds has already been moving steadily upwards. The markets have now seen apparent confirmation that the Federal Reserve may have been wrongly identifying a pause in the growth cycle as an early warning of recession.

The last time that happened was in 1986 when the Fed had to go heavily into reverse, after mistakenly stoking up a rip roaring boom. But though there may be a change of perception about growth prospects and there is a growing risk of quite a sharp downward correction in the markets, it is hard to see this as the beginning of a long bear market.

Halifax sacks SBC Warburg as float adviser

NIGEL COPE

Britain's biggest building society, Halifax, dealt a body blow to SBC Warburg yesterday when it dropped the investment bank as its financial adviser and lead stockbroker for its £10bn flotation on the stock market next year. The controversial decision will cost Warburg tens of millions of pounds in lost fees and savage its already wounded reputation in the City. Compensation for lost fees is considered unlikely.

Halifax, chaired by Jon Foulds, said its decision arose out of the "management relationship" with Warburg and a potential conflict of interest. The main reason behind the decision is Halifax's dissatisfaction with the new style of merchant banking at Warburg since its takeover last year by Swiss Bank Corporation.

The building society has become increasingly concerned

about senior level departures in the advisory team that was acting on its behalf. "If it looks unstable at the top, that can become a cause for concern," a Halifax spokesperson said. Another said: "This is such a massive transaction that will take place over a long period. You need stable relationships."

There have been two senior departures which are thought to have led to Halifax's concern. Anthony Brook, the Warburg director who led the team on Halifax, left in December to join the rival investment bank BZW. Derek Higgs, one of Warburg's most senior executives, left earlier this year to join Prudential.

There have been expressions of concern elsewhere about the bank's approach to client relations, which are now much more product-driven, adopting SBC's American investment banking culture, rather than the relationship-style that made Warburg the envy of the

City in its heyday. Halifax's decision follows the desertion of the bank by a long list of other clients, including Wessex Water, which dropped Warburg as its financial adviser ahead of its bid for South West Water this week. In addition, Boots and P&O have recently replaced Warburg as their stockbroker.

The haemorrhage of top clients is becoming a serious issue for the bank, whose corporate finance department is struggling, while the securities side is thriving on the merger. Halifax has replaced Warburg with Deutsche Morgan Grenfell as its financial adviser. Merrill Lynch, which was formerly joint broker with Warburg, has been elevated to joint broker while a second stockbroker is sought.

Warburg was saying little yesterday but did not attempt to hide its dismay at being snubbed off the Halifax team in such a prestigious stock market flotation. "We are clearly disap-



Increasing concern: Jon Foulds of Halifax, which is dissatisfied with Warburg's style

pointed by this but we wish the Halifax every success in its flotation. In the meantime we are pleased to continue to work with them on other projects.

Warburg stressed that as well as the long list of client deser-

tions, it had continued to win new business. It has been appointed by Kvaerner to advise on its £900m takeover of Trafalgar House. The Swiss drugs giant Sandoz has appointed Warburg to advise on the sale

of its speciality chemicals business.

Halifax stressed that the change in its advisers would have no impact on the planned timetable for its proposed conversion to bank status.

Reed shelves book sale

MATHEW HORSMAN
Media Editor

Reed Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publishing giant, yesterday unexpectedly shelved plans to sell its consumer books division, in the face of "low-ball" bidding from interested purchasers.

The decision, which helped send Reed's share price lower, was nonetheless applauded by some analysts, who said it proved the company would not be bullied into accepting an inferior price for the collection of publishers, including Secker & Warburg and Methuen.

The shares dropped to 103.5p, down 28p on the day. There were fears that the decision could delay the company's push into higher margin publishing businesses, which is to be financed through disposals.

In a statement, the company said it expected "a significant improvement in trading performance," and that it remained the intention to sell the business in due course.

Poor trading conditions in book publishing generally, particularly following the collapse of the Net Book Agreement last year, had encouraged at least

two serious bidders to offer far less than the £200m Reed had been hoping to raise. Richard Branson's Virgin Group was believed to be willing to spend just £80m. Among the other potential buyers was Electra, the venture capital company.

The deferral has dealt a blow to Reed's plans to divest of near all its consumer businesses, to focus on professional and electronic publishing. It has raised £750m so far through the programme, which included the sale of its Dutch and UK newspaper businesses.

Reed Regional Newspapers were sold in November to KKR, the US leveraged buy-out specialists, for £205m. Dagbladet, the group's Dutch newspaper publishers, was sold to PCM Uitgevers for £346m, while two smaller Dutch deals, along with the sale of the US consumer magazines to the media affiliate of KKR, raised another £189m.

Reed conceded yesterday that the sale had been a "major distraction". It is now planning to "renew efforts to return the business toward former levels of profitability" before offering the consumer books division for sale again.

IN BRIEF

Ciba-Geigy merger to cost 600 UK jobs

Around 600 UK jobs are expected to be lost as a result of the £41bn merger between Swiss drugs giants Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz. Speaking in London yesterday, Alex Krauer, who will be chairman of Novartis, the new company, said the forecast 10 per cent cut in jobs world-wide as a result of the deal would fall roughly proportionately on the UK workforce, which currently stands at around 6,000. The directors said Novartis was likely to exceed expected synergy benefits "conservatively" put at \$Fr1.8bn over three years, including \$Fr1bn from the pharmaceutical business. They also hinted that Novartis was ready to make acquisitions.

Two rail maintenance companies sold

Two more of the seven rail maintenance companies were sold by the British Railways Board yesterday. The Central Infrastructure Maintenance Company, based in Birmingham, has gone to GT Railway Maintenance, a joint venture between GEC Alsthon and Tarmac Construction. Another joint venture, Amey Railways, involving the Amey construction group and existing management, has bought the Swindon-based Western IMCO.

Confusion breaks out over Rentokil

Confusion broke out last night over the long-term commitment of Rentokil's majority shareholder, the Danish company Sophus Berendsen, if the UK company's £1.8bn bid for BET succeeds. Sophus, whose 51.8 per cent stake would be reduced to 35.7 per cent after a takeover, was willing to cut its stake still further to 25 per cent, according to reports. Rentokil said comments from Sophus's chief executive had been misquoted, and the Danish company would not sell its shares for at least one year after a takeover. BET, whose defence document is expected on Monday, said that "clearly there was a lack of communication between Rentokil and Sophus."

Hotel owner comes to market

The owner of London's Gloucester, Chelsea and Bailey's hotels is coming to market next month in a £350m flotation. Millennium & Copthorne Hotels, which also owns 42 per cent of New York's Plaza, is hoping to cash in on booming conditions at the top end of the hotel market. Currently owned by the Hong Kong-listed hotel group CDI, the company has a portfolio of 23 four-star hotels, including a string of provincial business sites in the UK trading under the Copthorne brand. Its parent plans to retain up to 60 per cent of the shares after the float.

Regal buys White Hart chain

Regal Hotels finally secured most of the White Hart chain of three-star hotels yesterday but was squeezed by Granada into paying a significantly higher price than it agreed with previous owner, Forte. Regal will pay a similar amount to the £122m it agreed with Forte but has agreed to settle for just 60 hotels instead of the 67 in the original deal.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Edgemoor (F)	35.3m (35.1m)	5.3m (5.8m)	7.82p (5.05p)	10 (8d)
Orange (F)	218m (167m)	13.1m (12.0m)	79p (71p)	26p (23p)
Hamble Countrywide (F)	150m (108m)	7.9m (6.1m)	2.16p (1.83p)	0 (0.05p)
Malvern Group (F)	315m (170m)	2.08m (0.82m)	0.99p (0.62p)	0.66p (0.49p)
Regal Hotel Group (F)	18.1m (7.72m)	2.5m (0.72m)	3.39p (1.88p)	0.5p (1p)
Sewerfield-Hawes (F)	25.6m (89.2m)	0.48m (1.5m)	3.07p (5.68p)	1p (3p)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim (N) - New results

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by Magnus Grimond

Lean pickings for investors looking for bid targets

Yesterday's sharp correction in the stock market notwithstanding, takeover fever continues to be a main factor underpinning share prices just now. The £40bn mega-merger between Ciba-Geigy and Sandoz unveiled this week has directed investors' gazes towards pharmaceuticals, which is currently consolidating assets.

Conditions remain fertile for further moves in this area. The industry remains highly fragmented. Market shares of the leading groups are bunched between 2 and 5 per cent. The firepower is there too. Not all balance sheets are stretched: Novartis, the company to be formed from the merger of Ciba and Sandoz, will kick off life with a dowry of \$Fr15.4bn (£8.4bn) net cash and securities. Its Swiss rival, Roche, has a strong balance sheet. Both are potential predators, but, despite the excitement, UK investors looking to spot their targets may find the pickings are lean.

For a start, the numbers of British prey have diminished after last year's takeover of Wellcome by Glaxo and Fisons by Rhône-Poulenc. Koror, Shares in Zeneca, the last middle-sized British group, have rocketed to an all-time peak on the speculation. But it now looks expensive. Cost savings might be dwarfed by goodwill write-offs. If Roche wanted to do a deal,

it is likely it would have to be done as a friendly merger and Zeneca made clear on Thursday that it would be reluctant to come to the altar voluntarily.

That is not a reason to sell the shares, however. Given its strong portfolio of growth products, Zeneca remains attractive. An agreed marriage with SmithKline Beecham or Glaxo Wellcome, still heavily indebted as a result of previous corporate moves, could give an inexpensive yet substantial kicker to earnings in the future.

The other sector which has been exciting interest from speculators is media. Big deals on Wall Street, such as Disney's link-up with ABC/Capital Cities, have highlighted the undervaluations of similar UK stocks. But what has really lit a fire under the sector is the new broadcasting bill, which is set to replace the limit on the number of ITV franchises any one company can hold with a 15 per cent cap on its share of the television audience.

NatWest Securities believes the industry could consolidate into three players by the end of the year and just one by the end of the decade. That leaves smaller players looking vulnerable. Yorkshire Tyne Tees, where Granada owns 25 per cent, and HTV, which could be snapped up by the MAI-United News grouping, look ripe.

However, Carlton, the London and Midlands television franchise holder, is the shark in this pool of ludders.

Elsewhere in the wider entertainment sector, EMI, with its lucrative list of recording stars and music rights, looks a sitting duck when it is demerged later this year by Thorn-EMI. The merchant bankers have also clearly been running their slide rules over Pearson, which is an obvious break-up candidate with its amorphous mix of merchant banking to theme parks. Bidders for both of these are likely to come from outside the UK, with Disney, Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, Reuters and Sony all possible candidates.

Ladbroke and Rank, two of the tired old men of the leisure sector, could also be broken up with relative ease, although some of the assets might be hard to sell. More juicy would be JD Wetherspoon and Regent Inns, pub groups spawned of the Government's beer orders. Parts of all four of these groups would fit well with either Bass or Whitbread, where leisure is seen as a growing part of the business.

Other sectors which have seen some of the hottest takeover action in the past year are still bubbling away, albeit at lower levels. Royal Bank of Scotland could prove vulnerable to HSBC as the Chinese takeover of its Hong Kong heartland approaches next year. Its Edinburgh neighbour, the Bank of Scotland could be similarly placed, but investors may miss out on other takeovers in the financial services industry. The targets of the budding financial conglomerates seem to have shifted to mutuals like building societies and life companies, where Clerical Medical and Scottish Amicable could soon succumb to bids.

Utilities went through a massive restructuring last year and it is hard to see that being repeated in 1996, despite Wesssex Water's indication that it is ready to move on South West Water. At the fringes, there could be link-ups between adjacent water groups, releasing benefits of scale from shared overheads, but the industry continues to absorb large quantities of cash, making it difficult for debt-financed bids to succeed.

The problem for investors is to spot any remaining value among the speculation. With shares just below record highs, it is difficult to find any corners of the market which remain untouched by the fever.

Biggest UK mergers & acquisitions so far in 1996

Target	Bidder	Value (£m)
BET	Reinhold	1,905
MAI	United News and Media	1,357
Lloyds Chemists	Gehe (Germany)	619
Lloyds Chemists	UniChem	602
Industries UK Asset Management	National Westminster Bank	340
Barclays (25% share buy-back)	Barclays	199
Alphacore (29% stake)	Carnival Corporation	190
Fitzall	Liverpool Victoria Friendly Society	188
Trade Indemnity	Financiere SFAC (France)	177
Jeal Homes	Paragon	170
Garmore (25% stake)	National Westminster Bank	126
BI Group	National Industries (Kuwait)	96.3
DFM Holdings (Dubai)	Edinburgh Fund Managers	83.3
TI Desford Tubes/TI Matrix		
Engineering/Hollow Extrusions	Hay Hall Group	55
Mitland Ltd	HSBC	50
Yorkshire Tyne Tees TV (9.9% stake)	Granada	50
Masclan-Glyptel (26% stake)	Highland Distillers	46.6
SaleTV	Pearson	41.5
GM Buses South	Stagecoach	40.7
		Total 6,337

Source: Acquisitions Monthly

With effect from the close of business on Friday 8th March 1996 and until further notice, TSB Base Rate is decreased from 6.25% p.a. to 6.0% p.a.

All facilities (including regulated consumer credit agreements) with a rate of interest linked to TSB Base Rate will be varied accordingly.

TSB We want you to say YES

TSB Bank plc, Victoria House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BZ

ANZ Grindlays Base Rate

ANZ Grindlays Bank plc announces that its base rate has changed from 6.25% to 6.00% with effect from close of business 8th March 1996.

ANZ Grindlays Bank
Private Banking

13 St James's Square, London SW1V 4LF
Telephone: 0171-930 4511
Member ANZ Group

market report/shares

A cut too far for Footsie as panic erupts in New York

DATA BANK

FT-SE 100

3710.3 -47.9

FT-SE 250

4252.7 -27.3

FT-SE 350

1860.9 -21.4

SEAQ VOLUME

895.9m shares,

37,966 bargains

Gifts Index

92.64 -0.75

SHARE SPOTLIGHT

share price, pence

165

155

145

135

125

115

Amey

MAM J J A S O N D J F

Shares suffered their biggest fall for nearly three months as the stock market seemed to be audaciously questioning the timing of yesterday's interest rate cut.

After clamouring for lower rates, the market greeted the eventual reduction with a 47.9 point fall to 3,710.3; at one time it was down 72.

It was, however, the American interest rate scene which provoked the slide. Shares were drifting, doing very little, with lower rates already discounted. Then US pay-roll figures produced panic: they appeared to dash hopes of a US rate cut.

New York crashed with the Dow Jones Average down 114.5 in early trading.

London, which in the main has chosen to ignore the Dow's record breaking exploits, was caught cold on a dull Friday afternoon and with market makers ducking and

diving prices slumped. Yet a trader at one leading house was heard complaining he had not received a single selling order.

Behind the fall was the fear the long-awaited cut could, ironically, turn out to be a cut too far.

The market had expected other nations to follow the UK but if US rates are frozen they are unlikely to do so. At best, it appeared that after three cuts in three months any further reduction would not occur for some time.

At the close only three blue chips mustered gains: GKN, on its results, 16p to 893p; SmithKline Beecham 4p to 721p and KIZ, 1p to 92p. Glaxo Wellcome, the drug giant which needs another acquisition, experienced unusually heavy trading with it appearing some investors keen to switch into other drug shares. At one time Zeneca



MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

was up 31p but ended 7p lower at 1.370p.

Read International's decision to defer the sale of its consumer books division because it had not received acceptable offers, lowered the shares 28p to 1.035p.

Takeover speculation was overwhelmed by the retreat. GRE, the insurance group, seemed to be on the verge of being the Friday afternoon ramp but ended 10p lower at 239p. But Alders, the department store group with extensive duty free interests, held a 12p gain to 202p as talk of a break-up bid, with LVMH taking the duty free operation, resurfaced.

Nynex held at a 1p gain to 105p as talks with TeleWest, down 1.5p at 141p, were continued.

Siebe, the engineer, was at one time 19p higher, reflecting an investment presentation. The shares ended 4p off at 833p. Barclays, the banking group, lost 19p to 733p on talk of a cautious presentation at its securities arm, Barclays de Zoete Wedd.

South West Water rose 8p to 616p and potential bidder Wessex Water recovered 3p to 327p.

Amey, the roadbuilder, surged 51p to 166p following the acquisition of a British Rail maintenance company for

£15m. The deal prompted Steven Williams at stockbroker Williams de Broe to lift this year's profit forecast by more than £4m to £10.75m.

The shares were floated at 161p two years ago.

Costain, the builder, was one to cling to a gain, 10p to 91p. The rate cut and bid hopes prompted the progress. Some television shares, sharply lower in early trading as it became clear payments from Channel 4 would be reduced, closed above their worst.

Scottish Television, at 638p, halved its fall to 20p; Carlton, at one time down 12p, finished at 428p, off 2p. But others refused to rally.

Allied Radio held at 3.75p as Independent Radio bid 3.3p a share, pricing the struggling group at £4.5m.

The bidder has the support of shareholders with 12.98 per cent and was thought to have

picked up shares in the market.

Severfield-Reeve, the fabrications group, duly produced the rumoured takeovers, two private companies. It is also raising £6.6m, placing shares at 180p; they gained 10p to 208p.

Dailywin, a Hong Kong watch maker, lost 33p to 117p after warning profits would be little different from the £27.3m achieved last year.

London Fiduciary Trust, with gold interests in the Philippines, held at 2.75p. T Hoare, the stockbroker, described the shares as "a cheap way to own a part of the Pacific rim of fire gold rush" now underway.

Hoare is involved in a private placing to raise \$14m for LIT at 2p a share.

Gold production, it says, should be boosted to 40,000 oz this year, going to 100,000 oz in 1997/98.

TAKING STOCK

inspirations, the holidays group, continues to attract takeover talk. After hitting 95p last month the shares have edged ahead on suggestions an overseas group is planning to buy a stake or even mount a full bid. They firmed to 106p yesterday.

The Canadians have discovered AIM. Probe Exploration, an oil explorer and producer with a quote on the Alberta Stock Exchange, is hoping to arrive in a few months. It expects to make profits of £175,000 this year. Assets are 100p a share; its Alberta capitalisation is £7m.

Part of the excitement which lifted Vlerian from 100p to 300p could stem from suggestions it has tied up a deal for its computerised data service with the up-market Meridian hotel chain, now part of Granada.

Alcoholic Beverages Anheuser-Busch, Inc. Beck's & Co. Carlsberg Crown Bottling Co. Heineken Kaiser Brewery Miller Brewing Co. Pabst Samuel Adams Stroh Brewery Co. Toll Brothers Wendell Weyerhaeuser Zaner	Banks, Merchant Bank of America Bank of Montreal Bank of New York Bank of the West Bank of the South Bank of the North Bank of the East Bank of the Middle Bank of the West Bank of the South Bank of the North Bank of the East Bank of the Middle Bank of the West Bank of the South Bank of the North Bank of the East Bank of the Middle Bank of the West Bank of the South Bank of the North Bank of the East Bank of the Middle Bank of the West Bank of the South Bank of the North Bank of the East Bank of the Middle Bank of the West Bank of the South Bank of the North Bank of the East Bank of the Middle Bank of the West Bank of the South Bank of the North Bank of the East Bank of the Middle Bank of the West Bank of the South Bank of the North Bank of the East Bank of the Middle Bank of the West Bank of the South Bank of the North Bank of the East Bank of the Middle Bank of the West Bank of the South Bank of the North Bank of the East Bank of the Middle 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UK EQUITY & BOND	Fund	Assets	Liab	Net Assets	Yield	Price	Change	Rating	Manager
UK Equity Income	100.00	0.00	100.00	5.50	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Equity Income
UK Bond	100.00	0.00	100.00	4.50	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Bond
UK Growth	100.00	0.00	100.00	6.50	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Growth
UK Dividend	100.00	0.00	100.00	5.00	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Dividend
UK Income	100.00	0.00	100.00	5.00	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Income
UK Equity	100.00	0.00	100.00	6.00	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Equity
UK Bond Income	100.00	0.00	100.00	4.50	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Bond Income
UK Growth & Income	100.00	0.00	100.00	6.00	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Growth & Income
UK Dividend & Income	100.00	0.00	100.00	5.00	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Dividend & Income
UK Equity & Bond	100.00	0.00	100.00	5.50	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Equity & Bond
UK Income & Growth	100.00	0.00	100.00	5.50	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Income & Growth
UK Equity & Income	100.00	0.00	100.00	5.50	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Equity & Income
UK Bond & Growth	100.00	0.00	100.00	4.50	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Bond & Growth
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UK Dividend & Growth	100.00	0.00	100.00	5.00	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Dividend & Growth
UK Income & Bond	100.00	0.00	100.00	4.50	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Income & Bond
UK Equity & Growth	100.00	0.00	100.00	6.00	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Equity & Growth
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UK Growth & Income	100.00	0.00	100.00	6.00	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Growth & Income
UK Dividend & Income	100.00	0.00	100.00	5.00	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Dividend & Income
UK Equity & Bond Income	100.00	0.00	100.00	5.50	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Equity & Bond Income
UK Income & Growth & Bond	100.00	0.00	100.00	5.50	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Income & Growth & Bond
UK Equity & Income & Bond	100.00	0.00	100.00	5.50	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Equity & Income & Bond
UK Bond & Income & Growth	100.00	0.00	100.00	4.50	100.00	0.00	A	John Smith	UK Bond & Income & Growth
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sport

Boardman is back in the saddle

It may have been an unlikely place to have begun world domination, but in a small café, just outside Chester, it looked as if aliens had landed. There must have been 40 of them, sitting wall-to-wall, in their shiny helmets and feet, and their multi-coloured, skin-tight clothing. A sign outside said the Eureka Café, but as you walked in through the door you could have been entering the Twilight Zone.

Outside a bicycle was perched against the side of a car while each alien filed past peering at it with reverence as if it were a dead king lying in state. Before one could utter the phrase: "Take me to your leader," the leader appeared, lean, fit and still pinching himself at his rapid ascendency.

They all may have looked like extras from *The X-Files*, but in reality they were cyclists from the Wirral, including the leader, who turned out to be Olympic pursuit champion, Chris Boardman, who starts his major comeback tomorrow in the Paris-Nice race after his injury during last year's Tour de France.

Predicting an overall top 10 finish in the Tour, Boardman crashed out after just two and half minutes of the Prologue, on day one of a three-week race. The multiple fractures to his left leg, plus a broken right wrist, ended his Tour almost before it had begun, and kept him out of the cycling for three months. It sounds like a disaster but Boardman, perversely, appreciates his misfortune.

"Well, although these things happen, I still felt a bit daft about it but, in terms of my career, it was the best thing that could have happened to me," he said. "I'd gone from winning the Olympics to breaking the one-hour record, to world championships, to winning a yellow jersey on my first Tour, and it was going too fast for me."

"It was beginning to get away from me. There was even an element of going through the motions. It's

FACE TO FACE

Britain's gold medal cyclist faces a hard season. He talked to Ian Stafford

something you realise as you sit in your garden, with the sun on your face, and you actually have time to reflect on the past four years. I now have a clearer direction, and feel more balanced about my career, and about life."

Although Boardman has already registered a seventh in the Tour of the Mediterranean, that was nothing more than a training run. His season begins in earnest tomorrow, and if he has his way, he is hoping to make a spectacular start to what promises to be the biggest year of his life.

"I'm looking to win Paris-Nice," he said. "I think that's a reasonable and feasible objective. It would be a nice stepping-stone, along with the likes of Milan-San Remo, and fit into my plan of scoring a string of good results leading right the way up to the Tour."

The Tour, of course, is the race that really matters. As Boardman says: "If the Olympics and the Tour were to be staged at the same time then, as far as I'm concerned - and most top riders would agree - there would be no contest. The Tour would always come first."

But after last year's disaster, following his early withdrawal from his debut the year before, Boardman has yet to complete the race. Unnerved by previous experiences, Boardman predicts a different story this time: "My objectives in the Tour will be the same as last year's - to finish in the top 10, and to wear the yellow jersey for as long as I can. The only difference is that I won't be so reckless this time and crash in the rain. If that sounds ambitious, you've got to remember that I finished second to Miguel Indurain in last



The wheel thing: Chris Boardman, outside the Eureka Café, contemplates winning the Paris-Nice race on his major comeback tomorrow

Photograph: Peter Jay

year's Dauphiné Libéré, which is France's second biggest race. So this is a reasonable goal."

Two days after the finish in the Champs-Élysées, Boardman flies to Atlanta to prepare for his attempt to win the Olympic time trials towards the end of the Games in August. The thought of claiming a second Olympic gold, to add to his pursuit title, hardly daunts him.

"I see myself as the strongest contender," he said. "I'll be up against Indurain, but I've beaten him before and see no reason why I can't win another title, it will depend on how I'll feel after the Tour. But I'm hoping I'll be totally recovered, with the most perfect preparation under my belt."

It was at the Olympics, of course, when the Boardman story really began. "I may seem like yesterday to most people, but so much has happened to me since the 1992 Games that it seems like a lifetime to me," he said.

His transformation, from unemployed cabinet-maker, to international cyclist, has been remarkable, even more so

when you consider his attitude just four years ago.

"When I was being interviewed in Barcelona I heard these things coming out of my mouth, statements like 'I'm only here for one medal.' As I was making these comments another part of my brain was standing back and saying: 'God, I can't believe you've just said that. I said these things because if you looked at my performances and times then it was clear that I could win the gold medal, but another part was telling me that only other people win the Olympics.'"

Back in 1992, Boardman was quite happy to let his unique bike from Lotus hog much of the limelight. "I was the first British competitor at the Games to win a gold medal. People just seemed to love the space-shuttle technology," he said. "But people kept making the analogy between me riding that bike, and a Formula One driver handling the best car. The fundamental difference here is that I'm the engine. If the media had taken one second to glance over the track they would have seen what the

opposition was riding, which was a carbon-fibre, monocoque frame, just like mine."

"It was slightly irritating that the bike may have taken a little away from what I had achieved, which is why I used a more conventional bike for the one-hour record."

The world one-hour record is the blue ribbon of the sport. Francesco Moser had held this record since 1984 but, just a week before Boardman made his attempt, an amateur from Scotland called Graeme Obree, riding a home-made bike, smashed the record in Norway.

"It certainly took the edge off the attempt because I suddenly found myself trying to break Obree's record, and not Moser's," Boardman said. "What made it worse was that Obree diluted the one-hour record. He made a big point of emphasising how he likes to drink beer and eat marmalade sandwiches before he races, giving the impression that anyone could break it. The record lost a lot of its kudos as a result."

"It was entirely within the rules, but after I had announced a date for my record

attempt, he suddenly went for it the week before, which, to say the least, I found annoying. People always try and lump us together, which I don't like, because we are very different people, with very different approaches to our sport. I use scientific and technological methods in training and racing, while Obree uses very individual methods. But he's very talented, if eccentric."

Seven days later, just two hours before the Tour de France came to town, Boardman broke Obree's record in Bordeaux. "For one day I was shadowed 'the Tour', he recalled. "I found myself on the Tour podium standing in front of Miguel Indurain in his yellow jersey. A year later, almost to the day, I was wearing the Tour's yellow jersey, but back then he probably didn't know who the hell I was."

"I bet nearly all of the Tour peloton didn't know or care who the Olympic pursuit champion was. It just didn't figure highly. The one-hour record, though, was different. That launched my professional career."

It was a move Boardman did not particularly want to make. The thought of being a cycling professional did not appeal to him. "The way I saw it professional cycling meant at least 90 race days a year, at 200km a race, incorporating great pain and some danger. But I realised that in order to move forward in cycling I really had no other option."

Still, it took a lot of convincing, particularly when Boardman was on the verge of quitting early into his professional career with the French team, Gitan. "I'd gone from a big fish in a small pond to a small fish in an ocean and it was hard to take," he said. "I'll never forget the *Criterium International* in France. I was going flat out up a climb in a 200-strong peloton when suddenly, a hundred of them left me for dead. I was in a state of shock as I watched them disappear."

"I really thought about whether I could make this work, but then I found myself sitting in a London hotel watching a rep trying to sell his product to another guy across the table. I thought 'That's not me'. That's when I knew I just

had to do it. Once I accepted it, it all became easier."

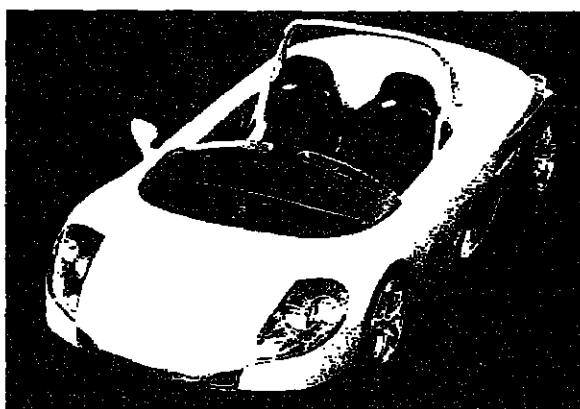
He won a couple of stages of the Tour of Mercia, and suddenly discovered that he could mix it with the best. Success followed in the 1994 Tour when, making his debut, Boardman took the prologue and held on to the yellow jersey for three days before withdrawing on day 11. Two World Championship titles (pursuit and time trial), concluded a successful campaign in which Boardman finally arrived and gained respect among the professional ranks.

Despite his injury-enforced absence, his fellow riders in the peloton now know precisely who Chris Boardman is. He has come a long way. But as he says his goodbye to the Eureka Café, and prepares to drive home with his wife, Sally, and baby Oscar, the youngest of his four children, Chris Boardman acknowledges that his potential achievements this year could put everything else in the shade.

"As long as I don't fall off my bike again it could be a very good year," he concludes. Indeed it could.

Win Damon Hill's Renault Spider

with THE INDEPENDENT



Today is the final day of our Renault Spider prize draw. We would like to give you the chance to win a unique open-topped sports car that has had one careful owner - Damon Hill. Damon, hotly tipped to take this year's Grand Prix crown from Michael Schumacher, will read test our prize Renault Sport Spider, a magnificent mid-engine two seater that was the hit of the Geneva Motor Show.

The Spider, which will retail for around £25,000, has a lightweight aluminium chassis and a 150 bhp 2 litre Cliv Williams engine which gives a top speed of 130 mph. Though the Spider's high-tech interior and racy, squat lines show its race track pedigree, this is a car that was designed for everyday use. Safety is a prime feature, as is driver comfort and noise reduction.

Acceleration, road-holding, cornering and braking are all that you would expect from a designer thoroughbred. Production of the Spider will be strictly limited, and your prize car will carry the Damon Hill seal of approval.

HOW TO ENTER

To be in with a chance of winning our prize Renault Sport Spider you must collect five differently numbered tokens from the fourteen we have printed in The Independent and the Independent on Sunday. Today we are printing our final token, Token 14, along with the entry form. It must be completed and sent in with your tokens.

Renault Spider

TOKEN 14

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

As previously published.

THE INDEPENDENT Renault Spider entry form

Send your completed entry form, along with 5 differently numbered tokens to: The Independent / Renault Spider Prize Draw, PO Box 83, Welwyn Garden City, Herts AL7 1TT. Closing date is 2 April 1996.

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Devereux must display pioneering spirit

John Devereux goes into today's Silk Cut Challenge Cup semi-final as a man with a foot in both rugby camps.

The Widnes winger, crucial to their chances against St Helens at Central Park, is the man who has spanned a gap that once seemed unbridgeable. Not only is he by far the most valuable player on Widnes' books he is also the jewel in the crown of Sale rugby union club.

The deal that will see the two codes share his services gives Devereux a special place in rugby history. A number of clubs and individuals have toyed with the idea - indeed, no week goes by without new rumours of the barterings being crossed - but only Widnes and Devereux have taken the bait.

When he finishes his summer season with Widnes, he will pick up the threads of a union career that were severed when, in traditional manner, he came north from Bridgend in 1989.

"I suppose that makes me a bit of a pioneer, but I don't think it has got the media coverage it deserves," he said. "If it had been Jonathan Davies or Martin Offiah it would have been front-page news. But it's John Devereux and it has gone largely unnoticed."

The arrangement, which he describes as "giving me some-

thing to look forward to in the cold winter months", came about after Sale - always a club with a healthy respect for league - made a generalised approach to Widnes.

The Widnes coach saw the chance to defray the cost of keeping Devereux at a club which has lost its financial muscle. And, by improving Devereux's finances, Widnes stand to benefit from having a more contented player on their books.

Devereux, who played and toured with the Sale player-coach, Paul Turner, during his union days, is looking forward to his return to his old code in September. Those thoughts are, however, strictly on the back-burner during another six months of league, starting with today's semi-final. "I don't have any problems keeping the two separate," he said. "It's just like closing one book and opening another."

The plot of today's book is generally presumed to consist of St Helens taking the one remaining step to Wembley. Widnes are, after all, a mere shadow of their old selves, stuck outside the Super League elite in the First Division, and Saints,

with Wigan out of contention, are obvious favourites to lift the trophy.

The trouble with that argument is that, when Cup rugby is on the agenda, Widnes can rediscover much of their old potency. That has been evident during this season's Challenge Cup run, but even more so when they went agonisingly close to beating Wigan in the Regal Trophy.

That has to help our confidence going into this game," Devereux said. "Nobody expected us to live with Wigan, but we took them right to the limit. We showed we can still compete at that level."

Widnes have had a demanding Challenge Cup draw, including away ties at two of the game's more inhospitable grounds, Workington and Hull. It was at the former that Devereux showed that he has lost none of his attacking flair, going 70 yards for a try that effectively won the match. In the quarter-final at The Boulevard, it was a relentless defensive performance that kept Hull scoreless and probably points to the way Widnes must go about their job at Central Park.



Devereux: Asset to two codes

"But we are under no pressure," Devereux said. "We have already exceeded all expectations by getting this far, but St Helens expect to go on and win it - so all the pressure is on them."

There will be pressure of a different sort on Devereux when he becomes rugby's first time-share player. League people will scrutinise him on his return from Sale for signs of weariness or, maybe worse, of bad habits picked up from union.

Not surprisingly, he is firmly of the view that one activity will benefit the other. "We should get away from this idea that rugby players play for a few months of the year and put their feet up for the rest of the year. Pre-season training can be a lot harder than playing matches."

There are a lot more matches to play before Devereux starts that other season. Widnes need him to be all rugby league player against St Helens.

Saints launch 'dream team' on Widnes

With impeccable timing, St Helens put their "dream team" three-quarter line on to the field for the first time in today's Challenge Cup semi-final against Widnes at Wigan, writes Dave Hadfield.

Alan Hunte's return after 10 months allows Saints to field the back line they envisaged when they broke the world transfer record for Paul Newlove last year.

It looks full of tries, so it is no wonder that Widnes, bidding to become the first club from outside the top division to reach a Wembley final, have been putting the emphasis on defence this week.

Perhaps the player with the most demanding job is the Australian centre, Mike Peckey, who will mark Newlove. "I

know I'm going to have my hands full, because he is a first-class player," Peckey said. "But I haven't thought too much about him, beyond thinking that I want to give him some problems as well."

If Saints' attacking prowess is beyond question then the issue of how they will handle being Cup favourites is more problematic. The absence of Wigan from the equation gives them the most inviting of opportunities, but it also puts extra pressure on them to succeed.

Their coach, Sham McRae, has discouraged any mention of Wembley in the build-up to the semi-final. "I just think it's premature. We have got a job to do for 80 minutes and that is what we need to focus upon," he said. McRae showed what a de-

manding taskmaster he can be by publicly criticising his captain, Bobbie Goulding, after most observers thought that he had played brilliantly against Salford in the last round.

All the signs are that Goulding has reacted positively to his coach's remarks, which he has not interpreted as a demand to rein in his natural instincts. No coach in his right mind would want to regiment Goulding, but McRae seems to be seeking an extra layer of cool calculation from him.

Widnes know that, if they allow him the space Salford did, he will destroy them. And if the former Widnes player, Karl Hammond, can get that all-singing, all-dancing back line moving, they will finish the job. Widnes can combat this

through their forwards, who, despite a lack of big names, have shown that they are capable of rising to a big occasion. That, in turn, throws the spotlight on Saints' pack, still a few notches behind their backs in reputation. One prop, Apollo Perelini, was outstanding against Salford, but equally significant today could be how the 18-year-old Andy Leatham copes with the situation.

Kurt Sorensen has resigned as coach of Workington, whose future is uncertain after the collapse of a takeover bid.

Barrie McDermott, the Leeds and Great Britain prop, has been charged with criminal damage and obstructing the police after becoming the first person in the country to be arrested using a CS gas spray.

مكتبة الامم المتحدة

positions. I think this is a new dimension which will add a great deal to the excitement. I have to admit that I never really felt comfortable with the Friday qualifying session because you would do your best but you wouldn't know if that was going to be good enough 24 hours later. Now it's a one-shot situation which gives every driver the opportunity to channel all his ability and aggression into a more concentrated action-packed one-hour session.

It's true to say that, at this time each year, you go into the championship believing it's the best chance you've got and 1996 is no different, particularly as I can draw on a more comprehensive bank of experience. I'm in a better position to enjoy my race and, come the 16th and final grand prix in Japan in October, I want to have achieved something I can be really proud of. The team is ready, I'm ready. Here's to an exciting and memorable season.

team on W-1

SPORT

Gullit and Jones on collision course

Football

GUY HODGSON

There is no pay-per-view, yet, for the quarter-finals of the FA Cup which does not mean the last four allowed to dream of twin towers will not be decided without cost. On what should be a showpiece day for football's glamour competition the action is diluted to quarter strength.

At most only one semi-finalist will be discovered today and while the weather has been responsible for Tottenham Hotspur and Nottingham Forest having to play out the drama of the fifth round, the chief culprit for the lack of action, as ever, is television.

The tie of the round, Leeds United versus Liverpool, is played tomorrow while Manchester United do not meet Southampton until Monday night which means the only quarter-final today will be Chelsea against Wimbledon.

The words short and changed come to mind for some reason. Wimbledon were quoted as 20/1 for the Cup yesterday which represents good value as they won at Chelsea in the Premiership earlier this season and caused them considerable problems in the dress rehearsal at Selhurst Park last week. It is a measure of the confidence running through the visitors that Dean Holdsworth, their top scorer in the League, will probably be on the bench after recovering from flu.

There is also the potentially explosive mixture of Chelsea's Ruud Gullit and Wimbledon's Vinnie Jones on the same pitch which passed without incident last week but is unlikely to do so for two matches running. Jones it should be remembered, was sent off for fouling the Dutchman earlier in the season and then was fined for making derogatory remarks about him.

At White Hart Lane, the identity of the team to play host to Aston Villa in the sixth round on Wednesday could rest on the fitness of Nottingham Forest's Manchester City have added a Swiss-born Italian to their list of foreigners by signing Giuseppe Mazzarelli from FC Zurich.

The midfielder impressed during a reserve match for City on Wednesday and convinced the City chairman, Francis Lee, to give him a chance. But the deal is subject to assorted clauses and means that 22-year-old Mazzarelli has until the end of the season to prove his worth.

A fee has been agreed but it is a lot of money so it could be subject to us being con-

vinced he is the quality player we think he is," Lee said.

"We have only watched him in one reserve game and we will have to wait a little longer to see his qualities. But I have no doubt having seen him play that he is a player of terrific skills and great quality and he will not let us down."

The Georgian striker Mikhail Kavelashvili has returned to the Russian champions, Spartak Vladikavkaz, to think over a £1m move after training with City last week.

Stuart Pearce and Tottenham's Chris Armstrong. The former has a sore calf, the latter an ankle injury.

Pearce made his comeback in Tuesday's UEFA Cup quarter-final against Bayern Munich after missing eight matches with a calf strain and although he was limping through the final stages of the game, he has shown a great improvement over the last 48 hours.

Gerry Francis, the Spurs manager, would certainly prefer it if he did not play. "Stuart obviously means so much to them," he said. "That's why they shoved him straight back in, as soon as he physically could, for a big match like that one in Munich."

If Leeds had a choice they would probably rather face Liverpool without Stan Collymore, particularly as the £8.5m striker has a slight grudge to exorcise at Elland Road. When the clubs met in August he had to be carried off after a foul that should have yielded a penalty. To add insult to injury Tony Yeboah later won that game with an explosion of a shot from 25 yards.

Steve McManaman, Liverpool's midfielder, agreed that result still rankled even if a 5-0 win in the return at Anfield was adequate revenge. "We're playing very well and we're confident where ever we go," he said. "Everyone's enjoying themselves and the two up front can't stop scoring so I don't see why we can't win."

One of the striking duo, of course, is Collymore.

While attention is on the Cup there is a significant day in the Premiership where struggling Middlesbrough, Coventry and Queen's Park Rangers will be desperate for points as they travel to West Ham, Everton and Aston Villa respectively.

The Brazilian Branco is likely to make his first start for Middlesbrough as they hope to arrest their post-Christmas decline of one point from 11 games while, at Goodison, Marc Hottiger is set to make his Everton debut after the Government's change in the work permit law allowed his move from Newcastle to go through.

Swiss signing for City

Manchester City have added a Swiss-born Italian to their list of foreigners by signing Giuseppe Mazzarelli from FC Zurich.

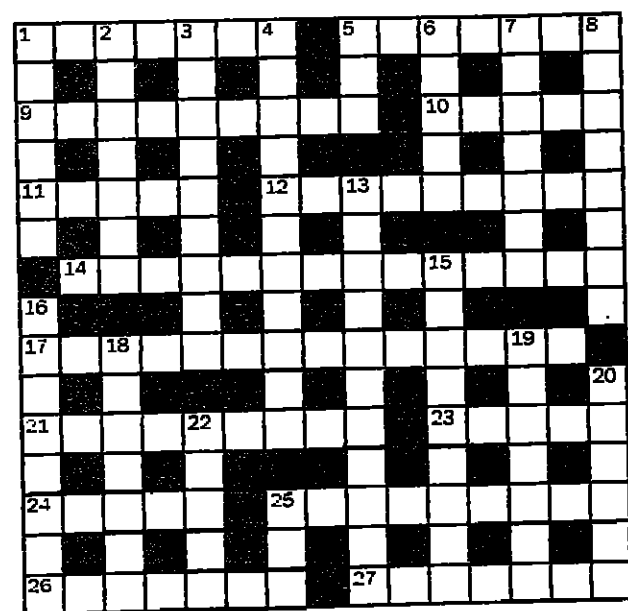
The midfielder impressed during a reserve match for City on Wednesday and convinced the City chairman, Francis Lee, to give him a chance. But the deal is subject to assorted clauses and means that 22-year-old Mazzarelli has until the end of the season to prove his worth.

A fee has been agreed but it is a lot of money so it could be subject to us being con-

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

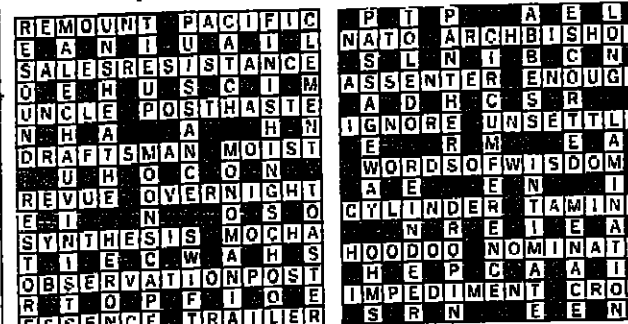
No.2930, Saturday 9 March

By Mass



Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution

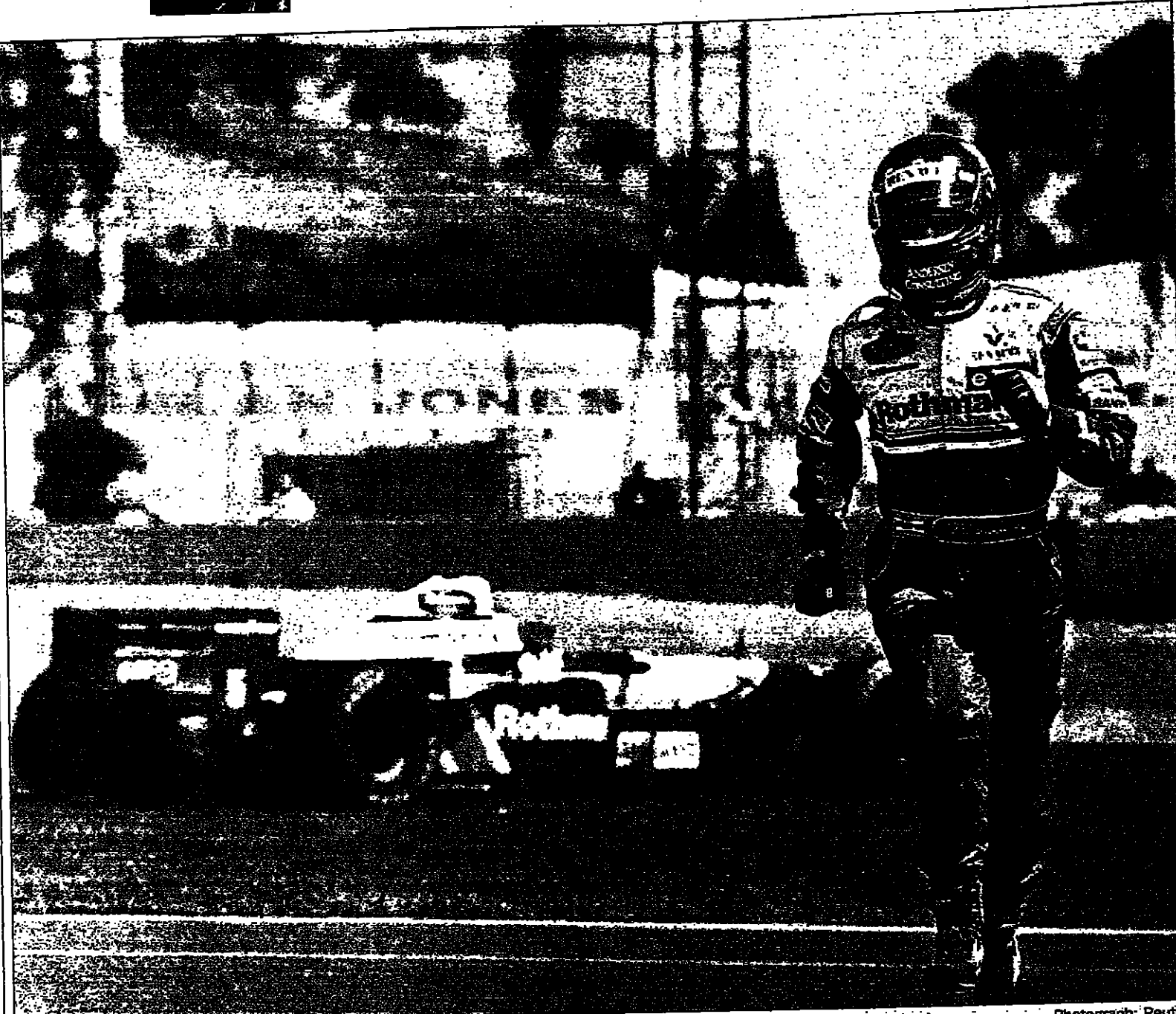


- ACROSS**
- Crash left vehicle rolling into river (7)
 - Tough spot needs right gouging tool (7)
 - Declining a call to the bar? (9)
 - Reportedly associated with a Greek character (5)
 - Working with one acting head (5)
 - Surveys in lots of papers covering Italy (9)
 - Course starters? (14)
 - Area of formality in veteran jockey's engagement (14)
 - Deal with arch crumbling in place of worship (9)
 - Content quietly overlooked in contract (5)
 - Holder of ace squeezing West (5)
 - Left in NE fort, in terrible scene of battle (5,4)
 - Time for mixed duets, yes? (7)
 - Name for man - one inside, committed (7)
- DOWN**
- Fury? Military type's lost none (6)
 - Form of protection? So it might appear in embargo (7)
 - Patronising types (9)
 - Something of a space-filler for a newspaper, perhaps? (7,4)
 - Conventional carriage (3)
 - They tend to appear out of focus? (5)
 - Your life's in your own hands, she'll tell you (7)
 - Goons among others mostly in review (8)
 - Crankly choleric quail, score about note (11)
 - Create a cushy job, perhaps (9)
 - Withdraw round lake as precaution against raid (8)
 - It's great, one figure, in Newcastle? (7)
 - True energy is internal in effect (7)
 - Go over weak point (6)
 - The German's about, climbing fell (5)
 - Cook, the Quaker (3)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hardbacked copies of the Larousse Dictionary of Literary Characters. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: Mr R Seale, North Humberston GA Bentsley, Chesdale, Lesley Sharrod, Frizington, Cumbria; Alan Raver, Swanscombe, Binda Large, Eps, Suffolk.

BACK IN THE SADDLE

Chris Boardman talks to Ian Stafford on his cycling comeback 26



Hot foot: Damon Hill sprints away after spinning off during an otherwise successful practice session in Melbourne yesterday

Photograph: Reuters

Hill's timely show of strength

Motor racing

DAVID TREMAYNE reports from Melbourne

Damon Hill took back the initiative from his upstart teammate, Jacques Villeneuve, yesterday as the two Williams-Renaults continued to dominate practice for the Australian Grand Prix, but neither driver placed too much importance on their performance.

There was a curious lack of tension on another day of unofficial testing, as Melbourne continued its laborious advance on today's official qualifying, which will decide grid positions. Hill said: "Tomorrow is what matters. What we did today is useful, but ultimately won't help me start from the front row."

Villeneuve echoed the sentiment, claiming not to have gone for an all-out effort. The drivers were reserving their energies for the first of the new-style one-

hour qualifying shoot-outs introduced under new regulations for 1996.

Jean Alesi complained of a lack of front-end grip but was the closest challenger in his Benetton-Renault, while the world champion, Michael Schumacher, improved after a troubled start on Thursday. He was fastest of all in the morning, with his team-mate, Eddie Irvine, third, but though they dropped to fourth and seventh respectively in the afternoon the German was satisfied that the Italian team had made significant progress. He was, however, cautious.

"The situation is that we have had no real test running, as far as developing the car is concerned. We have been able to do a little bit of work to sort out the problems we have encountered, but there are still little things which you have to change and make reliable. We are pretty much on schedule, but we are not in a position now to think about good results and finishing

paces. We haven't done a proper race simulation with the new car, so it would probably be a bit of a surprise if everything goes in the normal way."

The team's progress is nevertheless regarded as highly promising for future races, given

"If I'm having a hard time in a race then I'm going to look upset at the end of it. I wouldn't be a competitive person if I didn't get cheered off. But I want to enjoy this championship."

DAMON HILL writes for the Independent page 27

en Williams' markedly greater test mileage, and Schumacher added: "It's exactly what I expected when I came to Ferrari. I'm pleased about the principal situation. The base is all right. There are a lot of areas potentially we can build on. I predicted that the gap to the front row teams was going to be around a second - which it is right now."

His Ferrari predecessor, Gerhard Berger, who ended the day sixth fastest in the second Benetton after splitting the Ferraris in the morning, was the centre of mild controversy following comments he was alleged to have made about two corners on the 5.27km circuit in Melbourne's Albert Park.

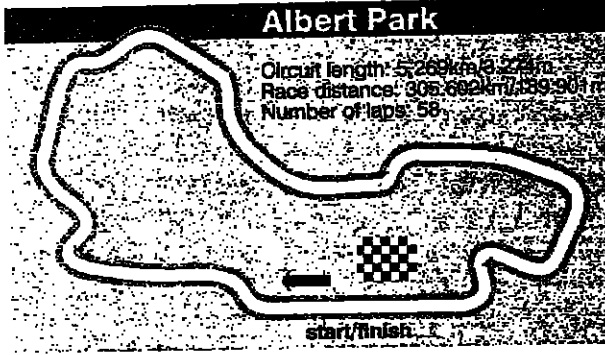
His apparent criticism had provoked miscellaneous comments from the vice-president of marketing for the sport's governing body, FIA, Bernie Ecclestone, who said: "I'm surprised that he would say that, given he goes so slow."

Berger later set the record straight: "I said that some points are a bit critical, and it was then written down as 'dangerous'. For a street circuit it's very quick, and I think when you have a map or drawing in front of you, you try to make the best run-off areas and safety points. "Then when you go round for the first time in a racing car, you find out that your line and

speed are different from what you expected. You find different places that you didn't think were dangerous on the drawing. But apart from those two corners about which I have reservations, it's a great circuit."

The qualifying shoot-out promises to inject some much-needed drama, but one potential blight faded as threats of protest action receded last night. Though the "Save Albert Park" campaigners picketed the black tie grand prix ball in the centre of the city, the race organisers won a victory when the Supreme Court upheld their ejection on Thursday of four ticket-buying protestors who had hung anti-GP banners from their seats in the main grandstand.

Jenni Chandler, leader of the minority group campaign to have the grand prix transferred elsewhere on environmental grounds, admitted that it is now unlikely that the threatened "international incident" will go ahead during tomorrow's race.



Cable gets in on Bruno act

Boxing

NICK DUXBURY

In a low blow aimed at BSkyB's pay-per-view stranglehold on the Bruno-Tyson world heavyweight title fight, the cable station Live TV are to give its viewers the contest for free.

The station, known for its man-in-a-rabbit-costume "News Bunny", will be showing a blow-by-blow "reconstruction" of next Sunday's 4am confrontation in Las Vegas. Boxers Terry Dixon and Damien Caesar will copy the moves and play the parts of "Big Frank" and "Iron Mike" in a makeshift ring 24 floors up at Live's Canary Wharf studios in London.

The stunt is an attempt to undermine BSkyB, who are charging up to £14.95 for exclusive footage of what is being billed as the fight of the century. And Live are offering a bonus, for Britain's Bruno, who is no stranger to pantomime, will retain his title no matter what.

Just like in the best of soap, the 1.25 million homes with access to Live are guaranteed a happy ending because any unpalatable outcome will be re-enacted, with our man hang-

ing on to his World Boxing Council crown.

Using radio and TV feeds from European sources, the two substitute fighters will be given instructions by a dinner-jacketed ringside expert on every step of the action 4,000 miles away at the MGM Grand.

At the end of each round, two pundits will discuss the make-believe fight's progress. Sound effects will add to the "realism", and Live - run by Kelvin MacKenzie of "Freddie Starr Ate My Hamster" headline fame while editor of the Sun - has gone to the trouble of matching the physiques of its punching players with Bruno and Tyson.

"They will be hitting each other," Ruth Settle, a spokeswoman for Live TV said, "but I'm not sure how hard."

Chris Johnson, Live's Head of Sport, is playing the part of defender of the little man. The mock-up, he said, was "for the thousands of people who can't or won't fork out the extra money to see the fight. You can't deprive the nation of this unique moment in British sporting history". In the fight for publicity, Live TV - like Bruno - can't lose.

Confident Collins, page 24

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• Orient-Express from Southampton to Victoria £2,499

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Orient-Express to Southampton on 31 Aug. • six night Oriana cruise to Monte Carlo via Gibraltar and Livorno (for Florence) • Concorde from Nice to Heathrow £1,999

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A black and white portrait photograph of a man with dark hair, wearing a dark suit jacket, a light-colored patterned shirt, and a dark tie. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is dark and textured.



REVISIT Pride and Prejudice

Jane Austen is the hottest thing since the Aga thinks it's the BBC's adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. If you missed it once, are in need of a quick fix of Colin Firth in those breeches, you can see all 314 minutes of it in glorious 35mm on the big screen at the National Film Theatre. At £10.50 it's the bargain of the week.

■ **Saturdays 2pm, NFT London SE1**
(0171-928 2252)

DINE

Dad's Army-style

Fans will remember that Clive Dunn played the local butcher Corporal Jones, so it's wholly appropriate that he should be lying in specially to join the grocer and short-tempered ARP warder Bill Pertwee for tonight's celebrity-studded cabaret and four-course dinner in aid of Comic Heritage. Fun and food guaranteed. **£30 including drinker, from Comic Heritage. (0181-348 1187)**

SEE
Yeats

The life of painter Jack Yeats was a great deal more interesting than simply being brother of the more famous WB Yeats. A new exhibition spans everything from his early works to his bold, expressionist late canvases which cemented his reputation as one of the foremost Irish painters of the 20th century.

■ Manchester City Art Gallery; Sat 10am-5.30pm, Sun 2pm-5.30pm

TRAVEL Through Time

This is your chance to have an out-of-body experience thanks to the Forbidden Science Weekend. The Lahkovsky box generates electrical energy similar to that produced in thunderstorms. Tony Bassett demonstrates its many uses, including, he says, time travel.

■ CCA, 350 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow (0141-332 0522). Day ticket £5, £2 concs

RENT
Dolores Claiborne

Who would have believed that Stephen King would have been the man behind this cracking *film noir* crossed with an old-fashioned women's picture? Jennifer Jason Leigh, Kathy Bates and Judy Parfitt deliver the goods in a film that makes you forgive its director, Randal Kleiser, for making *The Blue Lagoon* and *Grease*, and that's saying something.

■ *On general release*

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9. CLAMBA THE LASS DISTRICT 10. NORTHUMBRIA

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AND ANGLES
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Shaw's

picture story



Fans watch the England v South Africa match in Rawalpindi, in which England were beaten. Attendance at games has been irrepressible. 45,000 tickets for the Pakistan vs India quarter-final in Bangalore were sold in three hours — many camped on the streets overnight

Win or lose, England's batsmen can normally expect little more than astonishment or shrugged shoulders from their fans. Things couldn't be more different for the Pakistanis. The World Cup holders can rely on fanatical support from every quarter. Today they face India, their deadliest enemy. Next Sunday, the final will be hosted on home soil. The atmosphere is, not surprisingly, highly charged. Tom Pilston caught the mood in Lahore and Rawalpindi last week



Those millions who cannot get in to see the games live are glued to their radios for fast-action commentary

THE STATE OF PLAY



Above: throughout the sub-continent, impromptu games of cricket are organised on whatever open ground can be found. Here, teams form outside a mosque in the old quarter of Lahore. Left: Never underestimate the power of the crowd. The hurricane alert effect achieved when 30,000 fans drummed empty water bottles against their seats in Karachi put bowler Waqar Younis in his stride against the English team. Right: spied in a public park — it looks like freeze-tag, has elements of baseball, but is it cricket?



فکرانہ

He's back. And he's hungry

The early promise. The overnight success. The lean (and flabby) years. The comeback. The chocolate cake. The John Travolta story has it all. By Sheila Johnston



"I need something to eat," John Travolta is saying. An aide rushes over, quickly to click shut the door of his suite on this small display of star displeasure. But not before he can be heard adding, in a measured and eminently reasonable tone of voice, "Everything I've had here since yesterday morning has been unacceptable..." His cuttings convey the strong impression that Travolta prefers to meet the press in restaurants over a damn fine lunch. A colleague who interviewed him a couple of years ago for the *Independent on Sunday* boggled while he ordered a chocolate ice-cream, chocolate truffle cake in raspberry sauce and a chocolate mousse with whipped cream, and proceeded to devour the lot. When he is holed up in a hotel doing conveyor-belt publicity, there are always the consolations of room service. Usually, but now the door reopens to eject a trolley laden with plates whose gleaming silver cloches conceal doubtless inedible substances. It's 11am and he's starved.

Not that Travolta is being picky; we are in Germany, land of unacceptable nosh. And not that he's being in the teeniest bit unpleasant. At this year's Berlin Film Festival he might be at the centre of a media maelstrom, but he is conducting himself with unflagging courtesy and composure. At the next day's press conference, someone takes the floor with a carefully prepared *bon mot*: "You once made *Saturday Night Fever*, Herr Travolta. Are you in a FEVER of excitement now that your new film is being shown here this SATURDAY?" There is a chorus of catcalls and groans at the asinine question, but Herr Travolta drowns them out, magically transforms them into warm applause, as he replies with his dazzling smile, "Ich bin ein Berliner," and says with apparent sincerity that he is honoured and delighted to be present.

Two or three things without which no Travolta piece is quite complete. Humble origins: father a former semi-pro football player, later the proprietor of the Travolta Tire Shop in suburban New Jersey. Mother in show business: an acting coach. John the youngest of six children, with two brothers and three sisters who nicknamed him Bone because he was so long and lean. That was before he could

walk. Aged six, he informed his mom that if she didn't make him a chocolate pudding, he would cut off his weenie (she made the pudding) and has never looked back since.

Plane-crazy since a tender age and now the owner of three jets, a Vampire, a Lear and a Gulfstream II. A committed disciple of Scientology for nearly 20 years, and for which (alarmingly) he today seems a brilliant advertisement. First love Diana Hyland, an actress 18 years his senior, who played his mother in a 1976 television film; a year later, she died in his arms (of cancer), leaving him devastated. "Outed" as gay, along with a number of other luminaries four or five years ago, though since his marriage to the actress Kelly Preston, with whom he has a small son, those rumours have fizzled away.

Classic helter-skelter Hollywood career, from overnight phenomenon (*Saturday Night Fever*, *Grease*) to has-been in a matter of movies. Conventional wisdom has it that he chose badly and certainly, in the mid-Eighties, there were some frightful duds. Still, these things seem more obvious with hindsight: *Arthur*, *Splash* and *An Officer and a Gentleman* might have kept Travolta bankable, but forgive me if I fail to see that he missed out on a string of masterpieces when he passed on them in favour of films like Brian De Palma's *Blow Out*. Travolta's *Arthur* is a lost opportunity I can comfortably live without. Then Tarantino, *Pulp Fiction*, Oscar nomination: he instantly acquired the affectionate nickname The Comeback Kid. And it seemed everyone was pleased to see him in town again.

In Berlin he is accompanying *Get Shorty*, based on Elmore Leonard's satirical novel about Chili Palmer, a small-time loan shark (Travolta) who comes to Hollywood and launches himself successfully on a second career in the movie business. Asked earlier whether he had had any brushes with the Mob in Hollywood, Danny DeVito, the film's producer/co-star, had flannelled that he'd never experienced or even heard of "this kind of money-laundering thing". To the same question, Travolta promptly replies (even though, as a non-producer, he is far less likely to have come across dodgy dealings): "My brother [Joey] had done some independent films financed by... who

knows? That's the only close-to-reality I know of that whole world. I'd say, 'How much is it being done for?' 'Oh, we're gonna do the whole movie for \$200,000.' 'And where are you getting the money?' 'Someone in Las Vegas.' 'Oh' - he mimes slowly dawning awareness - 'I see. I get it...'

There does not seem to be much place for guile in the broad and open steppes of the Travolta mindspace. One remembers a diary he wrote for *Rolling Stone* magazine while playing a (Rolling Stone) reporter in one of his Eighties flops, *Perfect*. "I'm not sure if Jamie Lee [Curtis, his co-star] wants to make love to me or not," he confided to millions of readers. "It would be nice, but I'm getting cross-signals at this point... I get the feeling she would want it to be genuine, but that she gets confused when the time is right. I'm more comfortable being seduced by a woman the first time, and she doesn't know that." That degree of candour is, to say the least, rare in a Hollywood megastar, and rather disarming.

He's often cast as a bad boy and has just played two gangsters on the trot (Why? "Offers I couldn't refuse," he shoots back instantly), although, he also points out, the two characters are very different beasts; they just have "a similar profession", as he quaintly puts it. "I don't think the man in *Get Shorty* would tolerate the man in *Pulp Fiction* for more than five minutes. Because he's a drug addict, he's unprofessional. Unpredictable. He might be appealing but he's a loose cannon. Chili could smell that, just like he could smell everybody in Hollywood."

But these two hard nuts share a sweetness - an innocence, almost - and a vulnerability, qualities at the very core of the Travolta appeal: even when playing a bad guy, you have to warm to him. Chili's Achilles' heel is that he's a helpless movie buff - one scene finds him in a half-empty cinema entranced by a revival of Orson Welles's *Touch of Evil*, mouthing the lines along with the characters. "He's tough, he's real, he's smart, but his love for the movies is like a 12-year-old's. That's what makes him interesting. I fought for the childlike quality in him; it wasn't originally in there. I said, 'Please, if you don't see why he loves the movies

so much, you're going to miss a potential for this character that's enormous. All I need is three or four moments.' So they wrote the cinema scene and a couple of others. Like, I beat a guy up and then I find out he's a stunt man and ask him what movies he's been in. You just need a few things like that to colour a character and give him an arc."

Travolta talked with the real Chili Palmer on whom Leonard based his character, but says he did not attempt to imitate the man. "He was quite different than I anticipated. I met him during the movie and I was glad I didn't before because I may have picked up some choices that wouldn't have been right for how I interpreted it. He's very straightforward." And now Travolta springs to his feet. His body goes ramrod stiff, his large, slightly greying head is tilted straight and slightly upward, his voice rises a half-octave into a high, nasal, monotone whine. "Down in Miami, yeah, we were down there and this guy come up and I punched him..." Chili had an unusual personality, nothing that would have been transferable to the screen.

The sudden transformation is funny, impressive and a little uncanny, but Travolta makes acting sound like pure simplicity. "I study the character in as many details as I can get. I physicalise him until the thinkingness [sic] comes together. There's a moment when everything you say comes out exactly like he would say it. The way you dress, the way you smoke, the way you speak, the way you walk. When it's all automatic, at that moment you know: it's happened. Then, once you've got one character down and you're certain what he's about, it's very easy to start working on another. Characters have their own lives, you know. I could bring you three or four characters this minute."

Travolta will be needing that ability, for his dance card is full for quite a while to come. Next month we will see him in John Woo's *Broken Arrow*, a piece of enjoyable pyrotechnical bunkum that allows him to indulge his passion for flying as a maverick Air Force major who steals an 800mph plane with two nuclear warheads on board. It's scarcely an acting stretch, but he obviously has a ball playing a double-dyed (but still, inevitably, somehow likeable) villain.

"John [Woo] wanted him very stylish, he wanted him to smoke, then I had to mix that in with psycho... psycho... psychoses? if you will." He stumbles over the word, ending on a rising, questioning inflection.

"I remembered some military types I had met when I was younger, who were warmongers, articulate and calm but scary, and I incorporated a lot of that. I went to some bases and watched how they moved. It wasn't hard. I got to pontificate and order people around and smoke cigarettes a lot. My big fight stuff was at the beginning and end. Most of it was being nuts, know what I mean? I had the fun part."

There is more: over the next year or so we should see him in *White Man's Burden*, a satire based on the premise that blacks are the privileged class in society and whites the underdogs; *Phenomenon*, a fantasy in which he plays a small-town guy who becomes a genius after being struck by lightning; *Michael*, a comedy directed by Nora Ephron; and a film with Roman Polanski, *The Double*. Plus, further down the line, a project with Sharon Stone and a political thriller called *Dark Horse*. His combined salaries for this little lot are said to exceed \$40m.

As I leave, a trolley arrives groaning with fresh rations: time for a quick pit stop before the next session. He has his own Travolta Tire right now - a small one, and all but camouflaged by the expensive tailoring - but who's worried? He's professional enough to shed pounds when required, and bon vivant enough not to care about piling them on again in the down-time between pictures (though even in the *Saturday Night Fever* days, he never ballooned to Brandoesque proportions). He does not drink and, though a furious smoker on screen - one of the few actors, in fact, to practise this near-obsolete art with real panache - did not light up once on the several occasions I saw him (he sometimes permits himself a cigar, which, he says, reminds him of his father). These minor weaknesses put us in mind of an adored little brother with a passion for chocolate pudding. They're permissible - more than that, endearing. In a word, acceptable.

*'Get Shorty' opens next Friday.
'Broken Arrow' opens on 12 April*

COVER PICTURES
(clockwise from top right)
The Travolta look down the ages:

The monosyllabic New York disco kid in *Saturday Night Fever* (1977)

The man who knew how to dance and chew gum in *Grease* (1978)

The innocent hick learning the ways of the world (and how to ride a mechanical bucking bull) in Houston in *Urban Cowboy* (1980) - Ronald Grant Archive

The film that brought him back to life, *Pulp Fiction* (1994), in which he was a hitman with eyes of steel but a heart of gold, give or take a few carats

Today, in *Get Shorty* (1996) Travolta is a small-time loan shark trying to make it big in Hollywood - and succeeding...

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By Dominic Lutyens



Film poster collecting is a young hobby, especially in the UK, which is why a quarter of the 421 posters on offer at Christie's, South Kensington, Tues (10.30am), have never been seen on the open market. One of only three known posters of Abel Grace's 1927 French masterpiece *Napoleon*, is estimated at £10,000-£15,000. This is not a high price compared with prices for established mass-printed collectables, such as postage stamps. In Britain, film poster collectors whinged at paying more than a couple of hundred pounds for one until last year, when South Ken launched dedicated sales and its consultant, Frank Mounoud, got the word out. Film posters are now a hot commodity, and the South Ken US will be flying over in search of bargains at this second major annual sale. Some prices are unexpectedly low – Elvis posters, for

there were a lot of British buyers. We realised there was a growing market."

The market is partly driven by nostalgia. David Hutchison is a typical Cinegrafix customer with what he is happy to call an "addiction". "I loved film posters as a child and I've been hooked ever since."

"People want posters of well-known films, or of ones they associate with some memory, like their first date. But nostalgia doesn't always come into it," says Marchant. "Sometimes we have a poster of an obscure Twenties film, but the

image is so fantastic, that's what counts." Marchant and Nourmand stock linen-backed posters from Japan, France, Italy and the States, and are in constant contact with an international mafia of dealers who help them to track down rare posters. The two partners' different tastes make their collection even more eclectic, as Mar-chant explains: "Tony is a film connoisseur. I trained as a sculptor. Tony looks out for what's rare, while I'm interested in design." At Cinegraf, only posters with good graphics pass muster.

example, which are notoriously dull and were printed in large numbers. Even the only known copy of the poster for the film *King Creole* of 1958 is estimated at a modest £900-£1,200. Christie's is hoping the Americans will fight over it.

One poster designer who was given his head was Peter Strause (d.1980). Remember his bold, contrasty posters for the Academy Cinema that appeared in the London Underground in the Seventies and Eighties? Only 100 of each were printed from his original linocut. His widow Peggy tried to save one of each and 19 are in the sale, with estimates between £200-£300 and £1,000-£1,500.

John Windsor

"I won't buy any with ugly graphics—even if they're of a really famous film," Edwards says. "In fact, it would be boring to stock posters of *Casablanca* just because it was a classic film." His view might sound uncommercial, but being near the Design Museum, Cinegrafx attracts hordes of design junkies.

The description "gallery" hasn't made the place intimidating, says the laid-back Edwards. "Customers can slump on a sofa and watch a slide show of posters in storage—a nice cinematic touch and nec-

essary, as the gallery stocks 2,000 posters.

Reel Poster is more rarefied. A discreet entrance implies that only those in the know are likely to visit. Reverential par-quet primes you for the biggest array of posters you're likely to see in Britain: an art deco design for *King Kong*, Curtis and Lemmon shouldering a winking, complicit Marilyn in *Some Like It Hot*...

Reel Poster's collection (prices from around £100) pretty much stops with the Seventies. But, says Marchant, the shop will stock Eighties and Nineties posters if the images are really strong. "Today's posters are photographic, so you've lost the elements collectors like – the design and artwork. They'll also never be as valuable as older posters, as they print thousands, so more of them will survive."

As they say in the movies, they just don't make them like they used to.

- Cinégrafix Gallery, 4 Copper Row, Tower Bridge Piazza. London SE1 2LH. Mon-Sat, 11am-7pm; Sun, noon-6pm.
- The Reel Poster Gallery, First Floor, 22 Great Marlborough Street, London W1V 1AF. Mon-Sat, 10.30am-6pm.

- Cinegrafix Gallery, 4 Copper Row, Tower Bridge Piazza, London SE1 2LH. Mon-Sat, 11am-7pm; Sun, noon-6pm.
- The Reel Poster Gallery, First Floor, 22 Great Marlborough Street, London W1V 1AF. Mon-Sat, 10.30am-6pm.

The bakery is open every day except Christmas Day and Boxing Day. I go to bed at around 2pm and get up at 10pm. I hardly see any flatmate, and I only see my boyfriend at the weekend. I was an art student at Middlesex and saw the job advertised in a newspaper. I kept meaning to get in contact with some artists, but I never got around to it. I've done a few portraits - staff bring in photos of their kids. I never charge any money.

I live in Perchtham and cycle to work at 12.30am. We get a few dodgy customers; some don't want to, or can't pay; others are off their heads and buy loads of bagels; and you get people from nightclubs. *The Guardian* said we had a riot a few years ago, but it was more a fight between two guys. One woman sat on the counter with her stilettos in the cream cakes. I put it down to us being short-staffed.

Working here has made me tough. If you get grief from one customer, you might take it out on the next. We're always told to drop everything and serve, but sometimes I have to work overtime on other jobs - cleaning floors, making mayonnaise, tidying the deli. We get overtime pay, but you have to ask for it.

Our only perk is eight bagels and a loaf of bread day. That's the worst thing - you put a lot of hard work in and get little back. Better wages would be a sign of appreciation, or at least somewhere to have a cup of tea and a cigarette. We take our breaks (three 10-minute breaks a night) on the stairs.

The high turn-over of staff means there is always someone new to talk to. It can be really buzzy. I'm amazed at how far people come just for a bagel. None of us who work here are Jewish - I'm not even that keen on bagels - but the owners are.

After I finish at 9am, I have a cup of tea and cycle to a gym. After a work-out and a shower - cutting up 15 bunches of spring onions can leave a bit of a pong - I cycle home, have some cereal and go to bed.

I'd like to do something else, but I don't know what. I don't resent those who can afford to paint. Good luck to them. I'd just like to get my act together.

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2 SCAMS TO COVER ALSO AT WEEKENDS

The Housegos went to India. They were sick. Their son was kidnapped. But they stayed and set up shop there

By Charlotte Packer

David Housego's first trip to India might easily have been his last when, as a student, his overland hitch to Bengal via Pakistan turned into a tour of the sub-continent's nursing homes thanks to a ferocious bout of dysentery. As unromantic as it was painful, the three-month odyssey was the start of Housego's life-long love affair with the country.

The decision to move permanently to India was made for him in 1988 when the *Financial Times* sent him to Delhi as their Asia correspondent. The Housegos imagined the transition would be simple enough. After stints in Paris and Iran, they thought they'd slip easily into ex-pat life. "I'd been over a few times," says Jenny, a textile historian. "And we'd spent two winters in India with the children, and I felt at home."

However, in keeping with the tradition laid down by David years earlier, all the Housegos fell sick within weeks of their arrival. "We were incredibly ill with Dengue fever. It laid us absolutely flat. I was trying to find my feet, and not speaking the language, and having help which wasn't always as helpful as it might have been was extremely frustrating."

David recounts a catalogue of horror stories which would have had most people heading for the first plane home. "You're just giving the bad side," complains Jenny, although she does admit there were times when she wondered what they were doing there.

However, those doubts had long gone when, two years ago, their youngest son, Kim, was kidnapped while on a family holiday, trekking in Kashmir. "We were very shaken by it all," says David. "But it didn't affect our feelings for India. Leaving never occurred to us." If anything, the experience seems to have confirmed their commitment to the country.

"It's home now. Where would we have gone?" says Jenny. "Living in India is rather like being on quicksand." She says, "You believe that one day the sand will become solid, but it never does; instead you find that you have learned to move with it."

Unlike the initial leap from London to Delhi, the switch from journalism to business came easily for David: he describes it as a fortuitous coming together of ideas and events. "We had been in India for about four years and various plans began to go through our minds. I felt that I might like to leave the *FT* and Jenny was interested in setting up a development project of some sort. We both liked the idea of working in India." A hazy plan to use India's untapped traditional textile skills on upmarket products became a reality when the law regarding foreign ownership of Indian-based textile companies changed in their favour.

Shades of India was the result. Jenny had always thought it a pity that India's reputation for textiles was so bad. "It's thought of as cheap and cheerful," she says. "When actually the country has produced some of the very best textiles ever."

According to David, the current boom in the manufacture of western clothes in India is threatening tradi-



Photograph: Cherie Thomas

tional crafts. As he points out, you don't need embroidery skills to sew a pair of jeans together.

Although hoping to raise the profile of Indian craft, and preserve time-honoured techniques, the Housegos were determined to make the products as contemporary as possible. The design team, led by Jenny, include Stuart Robertson, an English painter based in India, and a French design consultant, Marie-Claude Berard. David's opinion is called in at the final stages of development.

"Whether it's paintings, the textiles we collect or something we are producing ourselves, David is brilliant at spotting what works. I get bogged down in all the art history. David has the eye and I have the knowledge."

It's a good combination. Although barely three years old, Shades of India's home textiles already grace the world's most exclusive department stores: Bergdorf Goodman and Takashimaya in New York; Portmault in Paris; and Liberty and Joseph Mainson and Conran in London. Their appliquéd and exquisitely embroidered bed-linen, tablecloths, curtains and mosquito nets are a sublime marriage of traditional Indian textile methods with contemporary designs and colours.

The latest collection in organdie,

a fine translucent muslin, very little used in the West, has had buyers from homewares departments worldwide falling over themselves to place orders. "Everyone is trying to copy them," says Sarah Bryant, Liberty's textile buyer. "The key to the Housego's success is that their staff take real pride in their embroidery. They are using India for its good workmanship, not as a source of cheap labour. There's clearly a market for luxurious and beautifully made home textiles. Last summer Shades of India's organdie mosquito nets, £275 each, walked out of Liberty the minute they arrived. "We couldn't keep up with the demand," says Sarah.

The Housegos started with one workshop in a Rajasthani village, and a finishing shop, laundry and offices in the heart of Delhi. Running an international business from India's capital is not easy. "Often in the summer, there's only water for an hour a day, and we need a constant supply for our washers," says David. Nightly water deliveries for seven months of the year and 13,000 gallon storage tanks on the roof keep production on track; regular power-cuts which cut off all communication with customers and their scattered workforce are kept at bay with a generator.

Compared to the office in Delhi, with all its back-up systems, the first village workshop was very basic: a rented house situated at the foot of a little range of hills with its own walled courtyard. Jenny describes it as "absolute heaven".

When Jenny opened the courtyard gates on the first morning, 20 women were waiting. "I'd estimated that we had work for about five ladies, but we gave them cloth and sat them down." The next day 40 women stood at the gates, and on the third there were 60. They short-listed 20 on merit and it has grown from there.

A training programme runs in tandem with the workshop ensuring that when women marry and move away, other local girls are able to join. "Not that they need much training," says Jenny. "Their stitching is so good. It's in their blood. When the work involves new techniques, they learn fast and the quality is always superb."

David suspects that the workshop allows many of the women to escape from mothers-in-law and husbands. "It's been a tremendous boost to the income of the village, and it's given the women more independence within their households. Everyone is delighted." So much so that a deputation arrived from a neigh-

bouring village asking for a similar workshop.

The Housegos now have several workshops scattered across India. In Gujarat, the women produce incredible chain-stitch designs; and in Assam, the remote north eastern province, wool shawls are embroidered with scattered leaves in the area's trademark Kantha stitch. "Where possible, we use local methods from the areas the women come from," explains Jenny.

"If we gave this work to women in another area, the needlework would become thick and lumpy and they probably wouldn't have the same instinct for the way the design flows."

So what happens next? The Housegos aren't sure. "India is so huge and there are so many different techniques," says Jenny. She will spend the next year tracking down skills and techniques unknown in the West. In the meantime, you can see the Housegos' latest range of organdie at Liberty in London.

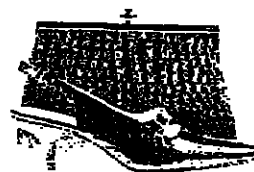
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6 Luc Bersen shoes. £110. These shoes are great for the transition between winter and spring with the majority of the foot covered, but with strappy backs. Again, these shoes have a slightly square toe, which will be more popular by the time summer arrives. A sensible height block provides inches without straining the foot. Available from Harvey Nichols, Knightsbridge, London SW1



Stylist: Charlie Harrington
Photographer: Andrew Lamb



bazaar

Checkout

Where can you buy a zip? A simple enough request, which is surprisingly difficult to answer. Haberdashers really are a dying breed: we dig out some of the remaining few.

John Lewis, Oxford St, London W1 (0171 629 7711)
John Lewis became London's mecca for sewing paraphernalia when other stores decided to do away with their haberdashery departments.

MacCulloch & Wallis Ltd, 25 Dering St, London W1 (0171 629 0311)
This old-fashioned shop dispenses haberdashery items to trade as well as the general public. You can buy anything from cotton to corset-boning.

The Button Queen, 19 Marylebone Lane, London W1 (0171 935 1505)
With over 300 varieties of pearl button alone, prices range from a few pence to hundreds of pounds.

Send fabric swatches in with details of quantity, size and style and they will be happy to put together three or four samples.

Buttons for Buttons, 32 Coppergate, York (01904 632042); also at Ilkley, Harrogate and Keighley.
This very useful small chain sells everything from zips, ribbons, lace, braids and trims to cotton. And, of course, buttons from 6p-£13.

Buttons'n'Bows, Knight's Court, 70 Canseway Head, Penzance, Cornwall.
They stock fabric and metal clasps to make nurse's belts, through to suspenders, needles, pins, tape, patchwork pieces, cotton and buttons.

The Button Box 211 Shield's Road, Byker, Newcastle (0191 2760785)
This relatively new shop stocks all haberdashery requirements from lace to wool braids, fringes, ribbons and buttons.

Good thing

Waggers Dri-Bags, £11.95 - £27.95

If you find that your car always suffers when you and your four-legged friend have been for a turn in the park, then zipping the soggy beast into a towelling bag may well hold great appeal for you. The bag not only dries the dog off but, thus restrained, it prevents it from roaming around on the back seat leaving muddy trails and hairs everywhere. And as if that isn't enough, the nasty pong of wet dog is kept at bay. Of course, your dog may object to being stuffed into a towelling bag, preferring a muddy struggle instead, in which case you may come off worse than the back seats of your car ever did.

Comfey Pet & People Products, 2-4 Parsonage Street, Bradninch, Nr Exeter, Devon EX5 4NW (01392 881 285)



Mad thing

A potting-shed for townies, £198

Hortus Ornamenti's 'Ultimate Collection' contains all that's needed to tend the window boxes and patio tubs which pass as gardens for most city dwellers. The kit comprises three hand-made tools (replicas of Victorian gardening gear), 45 'swing' and 30 'T-tag' copper plant-labels, a ball of jute string and a pair of gardening-scissors. Two slots at one end of the box provide space for packets of seeds, while bulbs can be stashed away in the main compartment alongside the tools. It's enough to make even the most reluctant gardener consider finding a few tubs for their bare window sills.



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shopping

Welcome to the pleasure drone

Gina Cowen meets James Hamill, an actor who runs a shop dedicated to the work of a most industrious insect

Shirley and Simon Codrington have two green Bakelite Beehive Knitting Wool Holders left for sale. Both in good condition. Interested? As a member of the UKHCS (United Kingdom Honey Collectors Society) you would be. Established last year, this quirky periodical produced by James Hamill invites avid apiarists and collectors to exchange honeypots and ideas. Swap a coffee mug with little beehives and bees all over it for a beehive china teapot, discover miniature pewter bears at a honey picnic, obtain advice on the restoration of honeypots, hunt for old coins struck with beehives or fifth-century beehive thimbles. Above all, cherish your collection of honeypots. They can range in value from around £5 to £10,000 for something silver and sublime from Mappin & Webb. Mr Hamill has a collection of more than 600 pots, as well as hives from all over the world: one in the shape of a windmill from the Netherlands, a Spanish cork hive - he is even reconstructing an octagonal hive from a drawing by Christopher Wren.

Aged 36, with classic good looks, he came over to England 18 years ago as a drama student with a bee in his bonnet. Although he takes on the odd role, they are fitted around his full-time job - passion would be more accurate - as beekeeper and manager of Hive, a little shop hidden away in the Battersea/Wandsworth hinterland. It is a honey paradise: an orderly clutter from floor to ceiling with honeys such as Cherry, Lime, Borage, Heather or Apple, freshly cut honeycombs and delectable concoctions that he and his wife prepare: white chocolate honey fudge, a wicked honey fudge sauce, honey mustards, and a special recipe tomato relish with honey. There are honey cosmetics, soaps, bath essentials, shampoos, conditioners, moisturisers and beeswax lip balms. He also stocks royal jelly, acknowledged for its honey-promoting and restorative powers, and there are also tinctures and ointments of propolis, used as one of the most effective natural antibiotics known to man. It alleviates a vast spectrum of ills from stomach ulcers to acne.

The shop stocks gifts as well: Posh stationery, Buzz Bee wrapping papers, cards, candles (in beeswax) and honeypots galore. It is probably the only shop in the country dedicated solely to bees and



Busy bee: James Hamill at his London shop, where you can buy all things apian

their products. Behind the counter, the wall is covered with Hamill's awards from agricultural shows such as the Natural Honey Show and the Royal Show. However, the most striking thing is a glass-walled hive containing up to 30,000 live bees, which Hamill constructed himself.

A third-generation beekeeper from Orange County, California, Hamill developed his passion for bees from childhood, learning the husbandry of these tiny industrialists from his grandfather. Stage and screen interrupted an otherwise continuous passion, which reemerged 10 years ago when he and his wife put a couple of hives in their garden. About six years ago, he went to study beekeeping at Hadlow Agricultural College in Kent and three years later, he opened The Hive. He now has around 100 hives in orchards, fields, an

allotment in Tooting, the back garden, the shop. The neighbours don't mind? On the contrary, one of them wants to take up beekeeping.

Hamill is researching breeding (he breeds Queen bees for other beekeepers) and the various diseases that can affect bees, including the deadly parasite varroa. Fortunately, the honey is not affected. A Queen Elizabeth Scholarship has allowed him to visit four of the largest honey-producing countries in the world: America, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. He has discovered that the international beekeeping community is one of great fellowship and hospitality. On a recent trip to Turkish Cyprus, he was changing his money at the bank and asked if there were any beekeepers in the town. The woman at the till overcame the language barrier

and rang up the local pharmacist who was a beekeeper. He promptly locked up his shop in the middle of the day to take Hamill on a tour of his beehives, followed by a celebration banquet with the whole family. Inspired by this fraternity, Hamill plans to trek with the wild honey-hunters in Nepal, crossing social barriers in a common search of sweetness.

Bees have a model of social structure that we should perhaps all be following: women in control. The Queen and her workers are exclusively female, the male drones having a short, rather sad role as impregnators, thereafter being generally ignored and left to die. All in pursuit of a sticky honey, the staple diet of the Owl and the Pussy Cat, the poetic food of Rupert Brooke's nostalgia ("Stands the Church clock at ten

to three? And is there honey still for tea?") and Jonathan Swift's moral musings: "We have rather chosen to fill our hives with honey and wax; thus furnishing mankind with the two noblest of things, which are sweetness and light". James Hamill has seen the light. He will also pass it on. From 19 March, he runs his next course in beekeeping. Four three-hour sessions held at the shop on Tuesday evenings, with a final session out on site, will cost £75. He covers the natural history of bees; beekeeping; hive activity, equipment and manipulation; harvesting and extracting the honey; and finally closing down the hives for the winter.

Contact James Hamill, The Hive, 53 Webb's Road, Battersea London SW11 6RX. Tel 0171-924 6233

The thing about...
Tabasco

When your food has no flavour, what do you add? Salt? Pepper? Worcester sauce? Anchovy essence? Mustard? Everybody has a favourite ingredient which gives their cooking that extra something. The two I swear by are sugar and that mid-century symbol of sophistication, Tabasco sauce. I've even dropped it into overland chocolate dishes.

The thing about Tabasco is not just that it injects fire into those foods that leave the tongue cold, but that it's an all-round style monster. That medicinal glass bottle with its spare, old-fashioned label, missing lid and name reminiscent of Caribbean limbo nights (it's actually made in Los Angeles) adds a decorative touch to shelves. It acts everywhere - hotel bars in Cumbria have it for that annual Bloody Mary, world trippers put it in backpacks, grannies sneak it into gravies, clobbers keep it to bring them back to their senses. It is the essential ingredient nobody discusses.

But it's always had one sales limitation in the northern hemisphere, and that's the wimp factor. While Africans, Chileans, Savannahians and even, bless 'em, Australians, happily scatter chillis about, we colder races go pink around the gills and say "gosh, when you said it was hot..." A bottle of Tabasco can last many years in the British kitchen.

But not for much longer. The company have launched a green sauce which, unlike Thai curries, is cooler than the red. Tabasco Jalapeno is comfortably familiar, coming in the same bottle with an almost identical label, but is mild and juicy enough to be licked from a fingertip. Comments, when it was tested on a group of trusting victims, ranged from "I thought you said it wasn't very hot" through "Dama, that's fine" to "Call that chilli sauce?" It will perk up your Welsh rarebit without offending your mother-in-law. Clear those shelves.

Photograph: Jane Baker

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Where Robert Harris meets Jeanette Winterson. Or not, as the case may be

I have gone down with an infection and I don't see why I should suffer alone. It isn't anything serious, just one of those acquired sensitivities to one of the many allergens of modern life. I contracted this one in my local bookshop, after browsing through the new titles section and noticing two paperback blurbs. One, for Tim Parks's novel *Mimi's Ghost*, read: "Tarantino meets Peter Mayle" and the other, for Libby Purves's novel *Casting Off*, read: "Joanna Trollope meets Tom Sharpe". Whether it was just the coincidence of the same location appearing only a few shelves apart, or the transparent coat-trailing of the names selected, I haven't been able to shake this irritating turn of phrase from my mind.

In both these cases the quotations came from critics, not publishers but, inasmuch as the crit-

ics liked the books and were presumably recommending them to their readers, the difference is academic. This is criticism as the hard-sell, which can take place at any time from the moment the agent first turns up with a fresh manuscript for an editorial conference. "I think you'll find it marvellous," she says. "It's about a female composer in Nazi Germany whose muse actually turns up in person. They become lovers and transmit German secrets to the Allies, encoding them in an aching beautiful piano sonata which Hitler orders broadcast as an example of the superiority of Aryan culture. It's sort of Robert Harris meets Jeanette Winterson." And, with any luck, when the book is published an obliging reviewer will scramble for the same cultural grid-reference (though you might have to settle

for "John Le Carré meets Iris Murdoch").

Grid reference may be a little too specific, actually. This is not a precise science, more a rough guide to where in the cultural neighbourhood this new arrival is likely to locate itself, just as you might say to someone who asks where you live that it's about halfway between Bromley and Sydenham. As we orienteer through the woodland of modern commercial culture, it's helpful to have some familiar landmarks to navigate by. Some directions are more useful than others, naturally; Joanna Trollope and Tom Sharpe might at least be found in the same county, might conceivably meet at a cocktail party or a British Council tour of Pakistan – so you can vaguely see what the person who wrote the blurb might be getting at – a rather English combination



THOMAS SUTCLIFFE

of middle-class angst and sexual comedy (I guess). But in the Parks's example the way points are too widely spaced to be practical – as if you were to say to someone "turn left at Ambleside and stop before you reach Chicago". Here the promise is slightly different, of a simple money-machine alchemy; you can imagine the publisher's rep with his samples case open, trying to conjure the sound of jingling tills in the bookseller's mind. It doesn't matter that the conjunction is completely implausible; it's possible to spend a few idle

hours speculating about what such a combination would look like – presumably when you call out a local artisan to wipe brain fragments off the inside of your car he turns up three days late, completely pissed, and then swans off without finishing the quarter-lights. Or you pop out in the evening for a *petit rouge* and get into a shooting match with the local butcher after he takes offence at your thesis that *Hoss from Bonanza* was obviously having sex with his horse. Even in the mind of the most fevered salesman, though, this isn't an accurate description of the book in question (a rather good black comedy with an Italian setting). It might even be counter-productive, a phrase that hopes to sell the book as hot-cakes but merely suggests that it is a mixed selection from the past-the-sell-by-date bin.

It doesn't help either that, as well as being a familiar commercial pitch, the location is also a fairly common piece of comic architecture, in which the possibility of unlikely marriage is exploited for laughs. The writer of "Tarantino meets Peter Mayle" is clearly torn between providing a shorthand for the matter of the book, and tweaking the line into something a bit funnier than "combines witty violence with an accurate representation of provincial life". And "meets" is on hand to solve his problem, just as it is for anyone a bit short of inspiration on the day.

"Meets" is the most fashionable version of this habit of mind, one with a Hollywood briskness about it, but there are other more venerable forms – "a marriage of X and Y", say, or even "a cross between A and B". Clive Ander-

son offers a good example of the latter in comic mode – and of the fatal temptations of the construction. In the book accompanying his current BBC series he describes Che Guevara as "a cross between Tony Benn and Hugh Grant". This is splendidly off-the-ball, conjuring pictures of a shy, flop-haired Englishman in stained battle-fatigues. He is clutching a mug of tea and staring down from the Corderilla at the enemy forces on the plain below. "Urm. I, um... look... oh fuck. I'm sorry but we can't blow the bridge unless we vote on composite 39 first. Umm... sorry." Presumably, if there's a bit of Tony Benn in Che Guevara then the reverse is true, too, though we will have to find another half: Charles Hawtrey meets Che Guevara? Che Guevara meets Mr Pooter? Enough – I feel a sneeze coming on.

The Lucy Gannon formula

From 'Peak Practice' to 'Soldier, Soldier', she's written some of the most popular drama on television. How, as they like to say on the box, does she do that?
By James Rampton



Lucy Gannon has a lot to answer for. Thanks to her, we have had to endure the sight and sound of Robinson and Jerome. She is the woman responsible for *Soldier, Soldier* – the army drama that launched the tuneless twosome to the top of the charts and on to every teenage girl's wall in the land. Not content with that, Gannon also devised the hugely successful *Peak Practice* (doctors in beautiful surroundings) and *Bramwell* (doctors in beautiful costumes). To create one top-rated ITV drama is more than most writers could ever dream of managing; to create three just looks greedy. She has also developed a nice little sideline in single dramas such as *Tender Loving Care*, in which Dawn French played a murderous nurse. Gannon is now one of a very few writers whose name alone is sufficient to give the green light to any project to which it is attached. So how has she done it? Does she, like the makers of Coca-Cola, possess a secret formula?

Usually hard-nosed executives go all gooey at the very mention of the most sought-after writer of popular drama in British television, an unassuming, well-built woman with short-cropped black hair and a winning smile. (If you passed her on the street, you might think that she was a care worker – as indeed she once was.) All of them extol, first and foremost, her mastery of character. After all, you can have a drama without car chases or casualty units, without explicit sex or violence, but you can never ever have a drama without characters. "The few times I've had an idea rather than a character first, it's always gone dead on me," Gannon herself confirms, while sipping coffee in a quiet café off Marble Arch after a gruelling day filming *Trip Trap* – a one-off BBC drama about domestic violence. "When I started *Wicked Old Nellie* [a 1989 play about a woman in an old people's home], all I got was a mental picture of an old woman sitting in a room looking at her foot and thinking, 'Whose is that? It can't be mine.' Unless you get the characters first, you can't do it."

Jonathan Powell, head of drama at Carlton and the man responsible for scheduling *Soldier, Soldier*, *Peak Practice* and *Bramwell*, concurs. "She is a complete one-off. She dominates popular drama because she is brilliant at creating sympathetic characters that audiences like. In her scripts, there's an absolutely natural and instinctive directness. She's unfettered, a very unpretentious person. She's not afraid of engaging the emotions of the characters or the audience." Think of the

beautifully modulated minut of UST (Unresolved Sexual Tension) between headstrong doctors Jack Kerruish (Kevin Whately) and Beth Glover (Amanda Burton) that resonated through *Peak Practice*.

The producer Ruth Caleb has worked with Gannon since her first play for television, an adaptation of *Keeping Tom Nice* in 1989. "Lucy is a writer with a good understanding of what makes people tick," Caleb reflects. "She has a very good instinct for what people want to watch, and you can't learn that. Her writing is character-driven. She finds the plots only after she's found the characters. There's a richness to her writing because it's bedded in character." This enables Gannon to deal with "issues" such as feminism (*Bramwell*) or child abuse (*Testimony of a Child*) or teenage pregnancy (*A Small Dance*) without bashing viewers over the head with them.

"Her strengths lie in dealing with ordinary people in extraordinary situations," Caleb continues. "She is also able to deal with complexities simply. There are layers of complexity underneath a work that appears quite straightforward." Like *Thunderbirds*, all the work goes on behind the scenes. Gannon, a widow with one teenage daughter, is often at her desk from seven in the morning till 11 at night, buffing and polishing her scripts. George Faber, the BBC's head of single drama, calls her "a master craftsman, or should that be mistress craftsman?" She has a nose for a good story and constructs it with craft and skill.

Powell adds: "She's amazingly technically proficient. The first episode of *Bramwell* [in which the lead character, a crusading Victorian doctor played by Gemma Redgrave, and her patriarchal opponents, are cleverly introduced against the backdrop of a medical emergency] is a textbook example of how to set up a series. In years to come, when they're reaching television screenwriting at universities, they'll look at that first episode and see a sheer piece of construction."

The architecture of *Trip Trap* is equally impressive in the build-up to the first act of violence. Junior school head Ian Armstrong (Whately, imaginatively cast against type) is first seen sweetly reading bedtime stories to his adoring children in front of a roaring fire. Then, ever so subtly, hints about his vicious streak are dropped in, as he tetchily corrects his wife's (Stella Gonet) grammar, wipes her lipstick off with a threatening "That's better" and dismisses her best friend as a

"bloody woman". The sense of menace develops as he complains about having to keep a "tight hold" on her all the time before, some way into the film, he suddenly snaps into ugly, rib-breaking punches when she gets a wine delivery wrong.

Unlike many writers who graduate straight from short trousers into major drama commissions, Gannon has a hinterland. After more than 20 years as a nurse, residential social worker and military policewoman – all of which came in very handy for her subsequent career – in 1987, at the age of 39, she entered the Richard Burton Award for playwrights in the hope of winning some money for a new car. Although she had only been to the theatre once before, she defeated 15,000 other entrants with her play, *Keeping Tom Nice*, to win £2,000 and a six-month spell as writer-in-residence at the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Faber, who brought that play to television, sets great store by the fact that Gannon has a masters degree from the University of Life. "She has lived," he observes. "She has had a number of very demanding jobs that gave her tremendous life experience – all of which comes through in her writing. She has an astonishing insight into the human mind. It's always good to work with writers who have lived: they've got more stories to tell. Whatever their talents, younger writers don't have the same urgency to impart things."

Powell grabs the baton. "It's unusual to find someone who came to writing so late in life," he opines. "She's very, very different from other television people because she came in without an inherited agenda. She came in fully-formed as a person. It would be a bit like Alan Plater or Troy Kennedy Martin popping directly from the womb. She's not an Oxbridge type looking down at the audience. She understands them without condescending to them."

Gannon underlines the importance of her background. Her father was in the Army and she had a peripatetic upbringing, leaving school at 16. "Army life gives you a breadth as a writer that you don't get if you've spent your entire life in Fiddlington-by-the-Sea," she reckons.

Trip Trap is ostensibly a departure from the comfortable, tried-and-trusted recipe. But the prolific Gannon has had popular successes with one-off "issue dramas" before: *Keeping Tom Nice*, about a handicapped boy whose father commits suicide,

picked up the John Whiting Award in 1990, and *A Small Dance*, in which a teenage mother abandons her baby, won the 1991 Prix Europa. Faber, for one, sees no conflict between hard-hitting and popular drama. "There is no distinction," he asserts. "Most popular drama is hard-hitting these days – look at *Band of Gold* or *Cracker*. *Trip Trap* is popular in that it takes ordinary people and puts them in a situation that has touched millions of people."

Gannon's work has not been immune to criticism. One columnist called her "the Betty Boothroyd of Derbyshire". "He said I was strident and left-wing," Gannon recalls, "and was convinced I had this huge political agenda. Wish I did." And after *Wicked Old Nellie*, the writer was condemned by a critic as "a bloody left-wing social worker".

But what irks her most is that smugger critics have looked down their noses at the popularity of her shows. "There's this tendency to decry ITV and to decry the popular," she harrumphs. "That's crap. If you value the viewer, then how can you be sniffy about *Peak Practice* or *Soldier, Soldier*? The great mistake is to think that if 15 million watch a programme and the reviewer doesn't like it, then it must be because the 15 million are all stupid."

Even after more hits than Mike Tyson, Gannon feels an outsider in the cocky world of television. "I still find it daunting," she admits. Nevertheless, three different drama executives are pleading with her for series ideas, and she already has a series about an open prison and a 17th-century love story in development at the BBC. The Gannon production-line shows no sign of slowing down.

"As soon as you get one out, they ask, 'Got any more?'," she sighs. "Telly is a huge writer-gobbling-up machine. Writing for television satisfies the village need for anecdotes – 'How's Mrs Bloggs?' – that sort of thing. I don't resent it. It pays me well and I love it. Seven years ago I was living in a council house with no central heating. Now I've bought a converted barn in Derbyshire and I'm trying to move to London. Writing is emotionally draining, but what a privilege at the age of 39 to find your voice. When *Soldier, Soldier* started, my husband George used to look out of the window and say, 'There are people out on the street. Don't they know *Soldier, Soldier*'s on?"

'Trip Trap' is on BBC1 at 9pm tonight. 'Peak Practice' continues on ITV at 9pm on Tuesday. 'Soldier, Soldier' and 'Bramwell' return later in the year.



Writer, writer: Lucy Gannon's success is based on her ability to create believable characters in programmes such as (from top) her new show *Trip Trap*, *Soldier, Soldier* and *Peak Practice*. Main picture: John Lawrence



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arts reviews

TELEVISION

Father Ted / Fruity Moments (C4)

Re-appraisal for an unholy success and pip-pip-hooray for fruit. By Jasper Rees

In this job, you're paid to trust your own judgement. You think a new sitcom is dire, you say so. It then wins lots of awards, you look at the cuttings as a second series approaches and note that only the *Mad on Sunday* agrees with you. Forgive me, Father Ted, for I have sinned. When I first saw your programme, my sense of humour malfunctioned. But like an old communist seeing the error of his ways, I now freely admit that the show is side-splittingly hilarious, that you are the most profound and many-sided comic creation since Falstaff, and that we have to go back to Luther to find a comparably detailed commentary on the venial frailties of the priesthood.

That sight gag involving two frocked men and a naked male posterior was a particular triumph – so killing, in fact, that you can grant yourself absolution for using it twice. Ditto the one, or rather two, about the priest on four wheels flying over a cliff. As for the joke involving the village idiot taking charge of a lorryload of sewage, who'd have thought that in the final frame, yourself and Father Dougal would be splattered in the stuff? A prophet couldn't have foretold it.

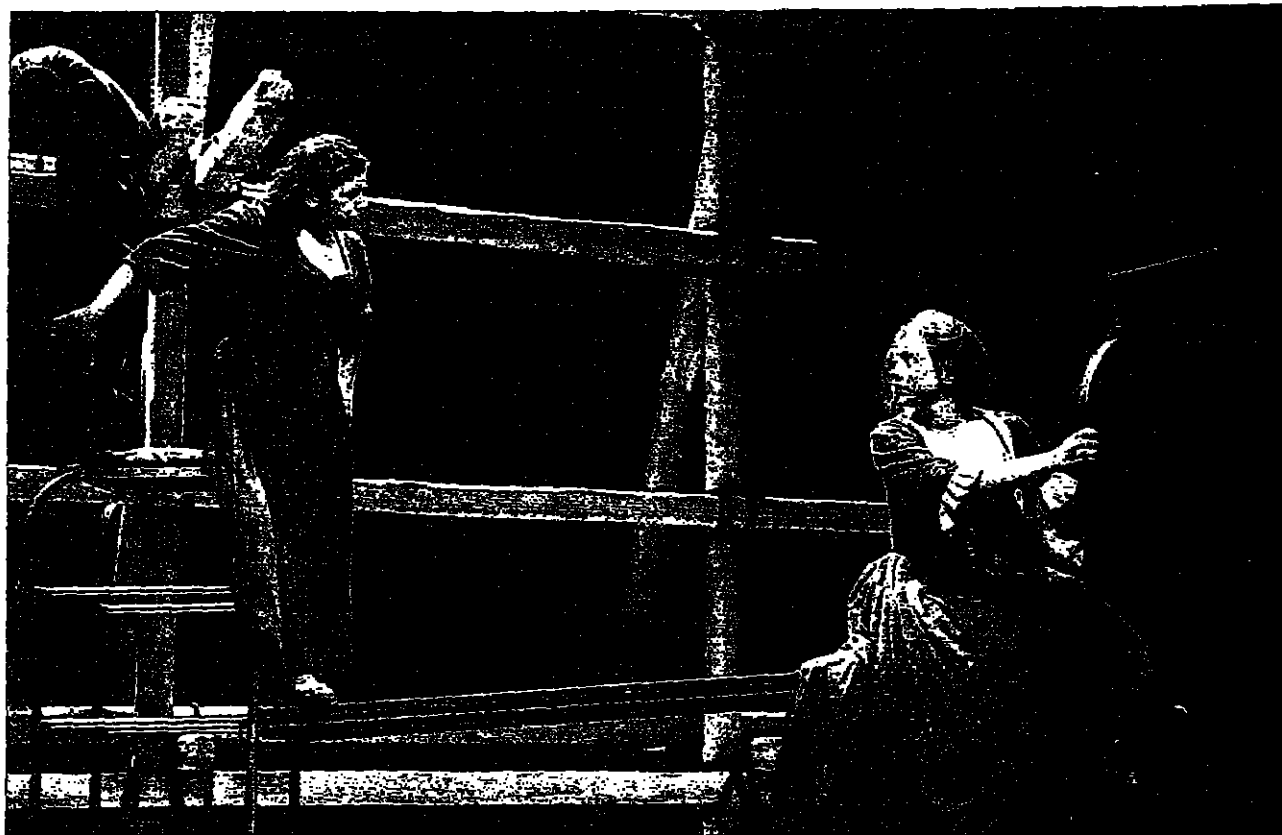
Because the pratfalls are executed with such cheerful vigour, it takes a while – in your critic's case, a whole series – to unearth the more knowing and world-weary gobbets of wit that fills the gaps in between. Far from appealing exclusively to the lowest comic needs (caravans falling over, old Father Jack too pissed to speak, etc), scriptwriters Arthur Mathews and Graham Lineham even run to literary criticism. Last night saw perhaps the first mention of Roddy Doyle in a sitcom. There can be no more reliable measure of a novelist's cultural outreach. The only other Booker winner it will have happened to is Salman Rushdie. "Ever heard the one about Kazuo Ishiguro?" doesn't really trip off the tongue.

Three unqualified cheers for *Fruity Moments*, a new series about the eponymous virtual. The narrator turning a watery text into wine was David Lloyd, once an England opening bat but these days the earliest broadcaster around. The coupling sounds barmy (what next? Classy Ray Stubbs presents *Antiques Roadshow*?) but makes perfect sense. Now apples, as well as wickets, tumble to the same intoxicating sound, a fruit-punch accent from the rural pocket of East Lancashire that blends flat northern vowels and a ripe yokel burr.

Much of the programme's advice seemed a bit remote in March. The most useful suggested you get going on your greenhouse strawberries *pres-simmo*. The man from the Royal Horticultural Society recommended planting early-fruiting varieties. He named two, "both American, by the way, but very good". The flavoursome subtext, still deeply embedded but doubtless due to sprout and flower in coming episodes, is that anyone who grows a lot of fruit tends to deserve the suffix "cake", which is presumably why they bought in a cricket commentator to tell us all about it.

THEATRE *Foe*, West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds

Silence is powerful, especially on the stage, as Theatre de Complicite's reworking of the Robinson Crusoe tale points up. By Paul Taylor



The voice of Robinson Crusoe: Kathryn Hunter (left) with Selma Aispahie, who plays her daughter

Photograph: Stuart Morris

As shown by the mute and mutilated form of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, silence tends to be more eloquent on the stage than on the page. The palpable presence of stage silence – its capacity to transmit a sense of enigma, threat – is of great advantage to Theatre de Complicite in their new adaptation of JM Coetzee's novel *Foe*. The book is the kind of scrupulous, searching counter-fiction to *Robinson Crusoe* that you might expect from a liberal white South African. In his version of the myth, Friday is not the chatty noble savage of Defoe's imagining, but a slave whose tongue has been severed (possibly by Crusoe) and a central brooding question mark, here embodied in a powerful, dignified performance from Patrice Naiambana.

With studied avoidance of sentimentality, Coetzee inserts a woman into the story of the island; indeed, he writes the novel in her voice. Once back in England with the traumatised Friday in tow, Kathryn Hunter's searingly expressive Susan Barton tries to sell that tale in order to secure the money that will liberate them both. In her communications by letter with her ghost writer, Foe, she becomes Coetzee's means of exploring such topics as the moral ownership and distortion of stories. Rob Pickavance's bewigged Foe is more interested in Susan's adventures before the island, searching for her daughter. Her willed silence on these matters is contrasted with the involuntary silence of the mutilated Friday.

Complicite have never been afraid of trying to make theatrical poetry out of improbably stageable prose, and with Bruno Schulz and John Berger they succeeded. Here, though – despite

an intelligent adaptation by Mark Wheatley and a grimly committed production by Annie Castledine and Marcello Magni – the material is so preoccupied with questions of textuality and so top heavy with text that it puts frustrating restraints on the exuberant physical imagination for which the company is famous. The show is successful at conveying the tricky tensions between the trio on the island (a barren, gully-scored block of baked earth washed by aural waves that rush towards you on the soundtrack with the painful exhilaration of an express train), but it does not solve the problem of presenting in clear stage pictures the symbolic relationship of the participants in the London scenes.

At the start of that second half, manuscript pages flutter from the sky and Foe's desk and chair, each with gigantic legs, dominate the view. The book, which takes the form of a memoir and letters, keeps insisting on its writtenness and, indeed, eventually establishes writing as the way Friday may find relief.

But it's hard to bring a letter writer and her correspondent into dynamic interaction and Foe's shifting dramatic status is not given a sharp enough focus. I'm ashamed to say that the bits I liked best were the ones of pure sensuous immediacy, for example, the moment, simple to achieve perhaps but magical, when Susan, demented by the noise of the wind, dips her head into a pool of water and all the sound suddenly switches off, creating, in a work preoccupied by silence, silence of dizzying intensity.

To 30 March. Booking: 0113-244 2111

POP

Tarnation, Dingwall's, London

Charlotte O'Sullivan falls for melancholia from the valley of the shadow of death

At 13, Tarnation's Paula Frazer was chucked out of school for smoking dope. As a result her father was fired from his job and the family had to leave town... It shows. Tarnation's music is no happiness fest. Try imagining Patsy Cline yodelling through the valley of the shadow of death. And then imagine something twice as lonely.

Tarnation, who played to a small but intense crowd at Dingwall's on Thursday night, are an unholy product of cowgirl punk and warped muzak. One bar will remind you of Lone Justice, the next of Chris Isaak. Whatever, it's not New Country and it's not tongue-in-cheek New Wave. It feels as old and earnest as the hills.

Tonight Paula Frazer, born and raised in the Deep South, wears a black velvet dress with a huge choker: in a good light she could pass for Elkie Brooks (at other times, it's undoubtedly Agnes Moorhead). She has a new band and they're mighty impressive. Her two guitarists take root on either side, plucking their strings with the concentrations of village idiots. Behind the trio, the drummer essays soothing brush strokes.

The melancholy anthems "The Well" and "Game of Broken Hearts" emerge slower than on last year's glorious *Gentle Creatures* album, increasing the dangerous desire to swoon. But with Frazer there's no ground to catch you, nowhere to fall except down, down, down. It goes so deep it makes your groin itch. Incredibly, Frazer seems oblivious to her power: she sways with the blank-eyed intensity of a Cassandra and then fumbles between songs like a wacky grandmammy. "Hey, the lights are so bright, here, it's like a UFO. It's OK, I'm not tripping..."

Highlight of the evening is "Halfway to Madness", with Frazer wailing, "In the muddy brown water where I wrote your name..." It all makes as much sense as the words of someone thrashing in their sleep. "How simple things seemed, when I just wanted to hold you" – ah, now we know what she's talking about. Her pure voice soars and the guitars build, putting you in mind of trains leaving town, cabooses rattling furiously along the tracks. That's Tarnation's music for you: providing a soundtrack for all the cheesy, hurtful images your dreams have ever thrown up.

When the mesmerised audience realise Tarnation have left the stage they start to whoop and holler. Frazer and the boys return. "Hello again, we'll do 'Big O Motel'", she says and the crowd cheers. "You really want some torture, don't you?" cackles Frazer, "seven minutes of torture..." We're talking lost love here and "cologne-drenched curtains" – pure high-school poetry – but in the mouth of this careworn woman it works. Yeah, we're wallowing in pain and lordy, it feels good.

CLASSICAL Danish Composers' Biennale. The Nineties may offer thin pickings but the Sixties are in safe hands – and they're Welsh. By Stephen Johnson

Denmark's Third Composers' Biennale set off on its two-week journey last Saturday. There were no fanfares, no conspicuous attempts to market the product, but the theatre at Copenhagen's Den Anden Opera ("The Other Opera") was packed, and the discussion during the intervals and after the concerts seemed – from my short investigative dips – lively enough. Refreshingly, there was little evidence of the so-called "ghetto mentality": no protests (however muted) on behalf of "isms" or factions; no obvious little cliques darting hostile glances around the theatre bar. Either the Danish new-music scene is a lot less bitchy and

insecure than its London counterpart, or the Danes are just better at swallowing their resentments. I have my suspicions, but for the moment I'll forbear to judge.

The quality of music in last Saturday's two concerts varied, naturally, but there was little that seemed less than accomplished, and from time to time – and particularly during the evening programme – a real, three-dimensional musical intelligence took centre-stage. Hans Abrahamsen's *Winternacht* was poetic in detail and overall conception. *Winternacht*'s brand of gentle Northern Impressionism was echoed in Olav Berg's *Four Poems* and in parts of Rolf

Wallin's *Boyl* (the name may have to be changed for British consumption). But the Berg had only just enough substance for one poem, let alone four, while the Wallin depended too heavily on stock soft-modernist devices, and the expected boy-lup never really happened. The players can't be blamed: the Norwegian BIT 20 Ensemble sounded like a first-class new-music band. They made a more convincing job of Magnus Lindberg's *Corrente* than any other group I've heard – so, those textures don't have to sound self-defeatingly dense after all.

The home-produced Athelas Ensemble's afternoon concert turned up

some unexceptionably pretty things, notably Svend Hvidtved Nielsen's aptly named *Flowerfall*, and one entertaining relic of Sixties absurdism, Pelle Gudmundsen-Holmgreen's *Je ne me tairai jamais, Jamais*.

But another Sixties survivor, Per Norgard's mini song-cycle *Prisme*, turned out to be a hard act to proceed. In its way, *Prisme* is just as much a child of the Sixties as *Je ne me tairai*, and yet so much of it feels discovered, not borrowed or imitated. In one delicious moment a sharp, dry chord cut off to reveal a comically wobbling electric guitar – others have tried things like it, so why was this unmistakably Norgard?

By an elegant piece of planning, the previous evening's Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra concert included two works by veteran Danes: the 86-year-old Vagn Holmboe's new 13th Symphony and the oratorio *Moses*, written just over 30 years ago (the same year as Norgard's *Prisme*) by Herman Koppel. Holmboe's senior by one year.

Holmboe's new symphony may fall short of his best (eg Nos 8 and 10) in imagination and sustained argument, but the vitality was real enough. Composers in their eighties, if they write symphonies at all, don't normally conceive them in three muscular fast movements.

Koppel's *Moses* was a find, clearly indebted to Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*, but with a hieratic grittiness of its own. Of all the pieces performed during the weekend, this and the Norgard are the ones I'd most like to hear again: The Welsh conductor Owain Arwel Hughes (whose BIS recording of Holmboe's Eighth and Ninth Symphonies with the Aarhus Symphony Orchestra I chose as one of my five discs of 1995) directed it all impressively, and was warmly applauded by the audience for his efforts. With or without the daffodil buttonhole, he looks as though he's well on his way to becoming an honorary Dane.



THE WEEK IN REVIEW

David Benedict

KEY



EXCELLENT



GOOD



OK



POOR



DREAD

overview

Michael Hoffman turns Rose Tremain's Booker-shortlisted novel of a physician in the court of Charles II into a film starring Robert Downey Jr, Meg Ryan, wigs, plumes and beauty spots.

critical view

Sheila Johnston was slightly disappointed: "While by no means a disaster, the story has a baggy, patched-together feel." "Rattles along at a good pace and doesn't overstay its welcome," smiled the *Guardian*. "Engaging," agreed *Time Out*. "Agreeably decorative and utterly flimsy," sniffed the *FT*. "You begin the film gazing in awe. Then the story grows dumb..." shrugged the *Times*.

on view

At the Odeon West End (0171-930 7615) and across the country from 15 March.

our view

Stunning Oscar-nominated visuals which look considerably more expensive than the \$15m budget.

THE FILM
RESTORATION

Dating from the era when rock took itself terrifyingly seriously, the Who's rock opera resurfaces as a special-effects extravaganza directed by Declan McAnuff to tumultuous success on Broadway.

Ryan Gilbey applauded "invigorating entertainment without the underflow of bombast." "Disappointing wetness..." McAnuff's production has the drive, skill and busting inventiveness to disguise every weakness," observed the *Times*. "Definitive," cheered the *FT*. "One of the greatest and most disturbing collections of songs in the history of rock," spluttered the *Telegraph*.

The high-tech staging and Chris Parry's lighting dwarf everything else. Like watching a dazzling but portentous pop video on stage.

THE MUSICAL
TOMMYTHE ANNOUNCEMENT
TREVOR NUNN GOES NATIONAL

Former RSC artistic director Trevor Nunn (54) will succeed Richard Eyre as the director of the National Theatre despite the press championing of young Boris Stephen Daldry and Sam Mendes.

"Nunn but the best," quipped John MacKie. "He does have his advantages. For one thing, there's experience," commented the *Guardian*. "I still wish the job had gone to the brilliant young Sam Mendes. The theatre needs a bit of excitement and all," wailed the *Telegraph*. "Mr Nunn is the best choice both to succeed Eyre and to succeed for the National," averred the *Times*.

Nunn now begins 18 months of preparation and planning before formally taking up the post in October 1997.

Nunn has little new writing experience but he's a great text man – and neither Daldry and Mendes seriously wanted the job.



MEMOIR PLAYING

When the National Theatre's new director, Trevor Nunn, takes up his post in October 1997, he will be replacing Richard Eyre as the director of the National Theatre.

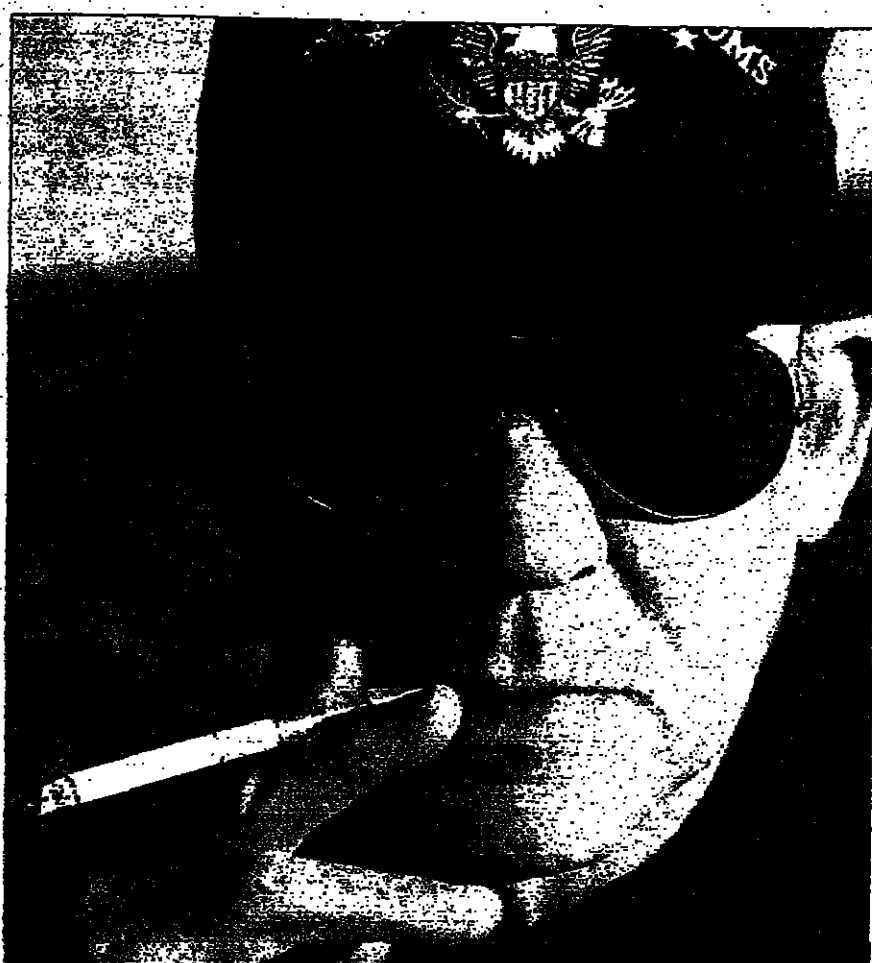
Nunn has little new writing experience but he's a great text man – and neither Daldry and Mendes seriously wanted the job.

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Literary lifers: the good, the bad and the nosey

Are literary biographers driven by envy? Tonight's Bookmark suggests life-writing is fuelled by corrupt impulses. Peter Parker disagrees



The usual suspects: Hunter Thompson (top) and Edmund White have three biographers on their tail. Sylvia Plath (here with Ted Hughes, above) fell controversially to Al Alvarez's pen in 1971

During *Lifers*, Roy Ackerman's BBC2 *Bookmark* film, subtitled "The Rise and Rise of the Literary Biographer", there is a shot of a man pounding along a road. "Before I begin work," Peter Whitmer confides, "the very first thing I put on my Reeboks. I go out my back door, and while I'm climbing the mountain I think about my characters I'm writing about as a biographer. I come back, sit down with a cup of black coffee and a slice of bread and go to it."

I cannot say that this is how I face the day "as a biographer", and I'd be surprised if it was a regime many of my colleagues would recognise. But then Whitmer lives in America, where it is fondly believed that beating the competition is merely a matter of proper training.

Whitmer was one of three people racing to write biographies of the cult journalist Hunter S Thompson in 1993. Despite his Reeboks, however, he was outmanoeuvred by the tough and wily E Jean Carroll, who simply moved in with Thompson, notebook at the ready. Whitmer and the third biographer, Paul Perry, prove ungallant in defeat. "The difference between E Jean and me is that I did most of my interviewing standing up," says Perry. "It was a very good autobiography of E Jean Carroll," says Whitmer. "If anyone's interested in that."

These three writers clearly make good copy, but they are unusual representatives of "the literary biographer". Whitmer, now a psychologist, was formerly "drummer for the hip-hop surfing pop group, The Turtles". Perry "has made millions writing airport books about near-death experiences"; and Carroll is "an *Esquire* columnist and chat-show host". Rather different track records from those of, say, Ian Hamilton, Richard Holmes and Anne Stevenson, who also appear in the programme.

Lifers is an instantly recognisable *Bookmark* product: the usual faces, the usual stories, the usual staged telephone conversations, the usual jazz soundtrack. It is not that the programme is uninteresting, merely that

it is desperately formulaic. Furthermore, the standard policy of editing out those who interview participants means that people are allowed to pontificate unchallenged. Germaine Greer, a long-serving opponent of biography, now finds herself the subject of one, and is filmed bemoaning the fact in a vegetable patch. ("I've just wrenched that poor little bean out of the ground," she says with evident empathy.) When she complains that her biographer might upset her mother, no one asks whether poor old Mum was upset by Greer's own ruthless slice of family biography, *Daddy We Hardly Knew You*, when she displays her extensive and well-ordered personal archive, no one asks who or what it is for when she compares biography with methods of torture employed by the Koreans, no one says, "Come off it, Germaine!". Similarly, no one challenges Al Alvarez, a notably pompous denouncer of biography whose "study of suicide", *The Savage God*, opened with what some people regarded as an exploitative memoir of Sylvia Plath. (Admittedly, the programme would have been on difficult ground here, since it includes a startlingly tasteless dramatisation of Plath's last moments, ending with the detached knob from a gas cooker rolling in front of a pile of books about her.)

The same tired old theories are served up. People write biographies because their own lives are "totally uninteresting", says Edmund White. The author of a massive volume on Genet, he should know. And yet now White finds himself the subject of three biographies-in-progress, so presumably—even if he is no Lytton Strachey—his life must be of some interest to someone. Scowling from a sofa, Martin Amis declares that "any biographer is likely to be some sort of *avant-garde*. It's second or third best to what you want to be"—i.e. someone like Martin Amis, presumably, not an aspiration I've ever encountered among biographers (or anyone else). For Amis, biography seems a poor substitute for cosying up to the great: "When you finish a book written by a

contemporary that you love, you want to ring the writer up, you want to have a drink with the writer."

What actually drives most literary biographers is not envy, feelings of inferiority, or thwarted creativity, but sheer curiosity—a fascination with other people's lives that's similar to the impulse that leads others to write and read fiction. Eponymously inquisitive myself, I am always astonished by the protestations of those who claim not to want to read about the lives of those they admire. Never mind whether or not the life sheds light on the work—I have never understood how it could not, while remaining equally convinced that the work should stand or fall in isolation from its creator: what interests us is human nature.

That said, one occasionally shares with Ian Hamilton a feeling that there is an "essential impropriety" about the biographer's trade. Even though my subjects (J. R. Ackerley and Christopher Isherwood) are safely dead, a number of their friends, relations and relics—not to mention a host of casual, though highly intimate acquaintances—are not, and somehow have to be incorporated in the story.

A more interesting aspect of biography than the rivalries and lawsuits rehearsed in *Lifers* would be methodology—by which I mean seduction, prevarication, bullying and deceit. I exaggerate, of course; though it may seem hard to believe, most literary biographers do have scruples. In order to discover information, however, it is sometimes necessary to set aside the codes by which you normally conduct your life. Although just about able to restrain myself from reading other people's letters and diaries when off duty, in libraries and archives I have occasionally and inadvertently been given or happened upon papers not intended for my eyes. One writer told me of the time he was handed the personnel file of a former employee of the BBC. He foolishly took a lunch break before inspecting this booty. When he returned it had vanished—a cautionary tale I have carried with

me ever since. I once came across a mislaid cache of letters, which I hastily read before handing them over to their owner. "I don't think these are supposed to be here," I said, adopting the expression of the Most Honourable Boy in the School. "I assume you read those letters," he remarked casually a few days later. I hadn't fooled him for a minute.

I have also gone to interview people hoping to trick them into revealing things that I suspect but need to confirm. It doesn't always work. I couldn't get one very distinguished British acting knight to confirm that he had enjoyed a brief fling with Ackerley in the 1920s, though he freely admitted to one with Godfrey Winn (a rather more shaming confession, by any standards). Despite my probing, a key figure in Isherwood's life is currently holding out on me about a highly significant episode he unwisely confided to others, who immediately blabbed to me. Unwilling to betray my sources (both of whom, uneasily valiant for truth, spoke to me "off the record"), I must hide my time.

For most of us there remain limits to what we will do in order to acquire information. E Jean Carroll insists that she did not "scrooge" Hunter Thompson, but implies that this was a question of health risks rather than biographical ethics. No one has ever thrust themselves at me in exchange for information, alas, but one biographer told me that not only he but also his partner were obliged to pop into bed with an elderly gentleman before he would talk. I subsequently read his Acknowledgements page ("...beyond the call of duty...") very carefully.

A genuinely revealing and lively programme could be made by following a single biographer in his or her quest, for the job has many of the elements of a thriller or a black comedy. But who would volunteer? As James Atlas, who has spent a decade stalking Saul Bellow, puts it: "I feel for him at times. It must be a fearful experience to be confronted by a biographer. I wouldn't want my biography written."

The greatest story never told

Karen Armstrong is unimpressed by a simplistic rendering of the Bible as fiction

Walter Wangerin has attempted to rewrite the Bible as a novel. "He has given the Bible back to the people," proclaims the endorsement on the cover of *The Book of God*. "The Good Book becomes the Good Read." Christians who have found the Bible perplexing and arcane, its message obscured by centuries of dusty commentary, can take heart. In prose reminiscent of that of Jeffrey Archer or Judith Krantz, Wangerin traces the biblical story from the destruction of Sodom to the foundation of the Christian Church.

Despite the growing fundamentalist trend that insists the biblical stories are literal state-

ments of historical fact, there is nothing new about perceiving the Bible as fiction. Scholars have demonstrated the immense literary skill employed by the writers and the complexity of the text, which makes a simplistic interpretation impossible. It is becoming increasingly difficult to treat the Bible as a holy encyclopaedia in which we can find accurate information about God: instead it forces us to confront the complications of the human condition.

Wangerin's novel, however, seems to go out of its way to drain the Bible of both depth and complexity. At the end of a century scarred by genocide and holo-

The Book of God
Walter Wangerin
Lion, £20

caust, for example, he finds nothing disturbing in Joshua's indiscriminate slaughter of the inhabitants of Canaan, nor does he seem troubled by God's extermination of almost the entire human race during the Flood. He prefers to take the text at face value than to ask difficult questions.

Not so the biblical-writers, who often hint at untold complica-

tions. They leave us with the distinct impression that Isaac was profoundly damaged by Abraham's readiness to offer him as a human sacrifice. Yet in Wangerin's novel, Isaac takes the projected sacrifice serenely in his stride.

In the Bible, our glimpses of the divine are often perplexing, fearful and ambiguous. We frequently have to wrestle with the text as Jacob wrestled with the angel and, like Jacob, experience only an elusive sense of blessing. But there is no such struggle in *The Book of God*. According to Wangerin, Purple prose offers a facile substitute for spirituality. Of Moses, for example, Wangerin plangently notes:

"When one caught him gazing upon the people in the evening, there appeared in his eyes a dreaming gentleness. A kindness. He makes no effort to square this with the fierce Lawgiver who, a few pages earlier, had ordered a ruthless massacre to punish the worshippers of the Golden Calf."

Jesus himself appears as a soap star, his clean-cut looks (much is made of the fact that he shaves regularly) revealing his nobility of soul. His appearance effects a "small commotion" in the breast of Mary Magdalene, when she sees that his "black hair reflected a deep red sheen" and that he was "radiant and ruddy, his teeth per-

fectly white." Unsurprisingly, her response is as banal as Jesus's good looks. "She blurted: 'Raisin cakes. Rabboni! A little lunch, sir, while you are sitting here?'"

This lush but trite lyricism recurs with greater frequency in the gospel portions of Wangerin's novel, probably reflecting his belief in the richness of the New Testament as opposed to the Old. Indeed, we leave the Hebrew Bible with a grim picture of the religion of Israel. We see the people of Jerusalem listening to Ezra's reading of the scriptures during a freezing rainstorm. Nehemiah looks up at the grey clouds and "thinks he hears thunder, a mut-

tering in heaven, and he takes this as a sign of divine approval." The implication is that Judaism has become a rigid, comfortless faith, its deity remote and ambiguous.

This apparent failure to recognize the integrity of the Jewish religious experience points to a basic flaw in Wangerin's project. Unlike his novel, the Bible does not represent a single viewpoint. It is a collection of texts, which present conflicting visions. It thus bears witness to the fact that no one human expression of the divine can ever suffice. If we forget this, our understanding of the Bible is likely to be as reductive and trivial as Wangerin's empty epic.

Packaging evil as splatter-pulp

Harmful neurotics, silly saints and nasty passages from the classics. There's got to be more to it than this, says Pete Davies

Readers expecting a gorefest will be disappointed. The packaging's all there—the doomy pomp of the title, the jacket with the disembodied mad eyes on a ground of blood-red, the praise for Masters' previous work on Jeffrey Dahmer and Dennis Nilsen—but don't be fooled. This is philosophy here, this is a dig into the deep matter of why we do bad stuff. This is "an incisive, thoughtful, and provocative meditation..."

And I'm the King of Buganda. Sloppy, self-regarding, banal, this book is the intellectual equivalent of open-cast mining, foraging across a mountain of other people's ideas, it may unearth an incontestable conclusion, but it doesn't half trash the landscape along the way. It reaches its nadir with a perfunctory account of the Holocaust lifted wholesale from Martin Gilbert—but there is laziness throughout.

It won't do to warn against unthinking simplifications, and then to claim that pit-bull owners "are all, to a man, feeble brutes". You cannot describe Joan of Arc as "arguably a harmful neurotic", and yet say sixty pages later that "there was nothing of the hysteric about her". It's patently nonsense on any

The Evil that Men Do
by Brian Masters
Doubleday, £18.99

page to proclaim that "there are dozens of St Franceses in all our lives". Other statements are simply risible. Audrey Hepburn had "more spunk" than Jesus? Penelope Keith is in "the dominant five per cent of the human race"? As for the author's announcement that, "it is certainly true that men... sometimes slap their mates across the face" with their penises, I'm afraid at that point I had to drop the book helpless with laughter, afflicted with surreal visions of a pack of *Loaded* readers indulging in horseplay in the public bar.

Even properly construed, it's a peculiar image, but some of Brian Masters' other remarks are pretty peculiar too. His contention that we hear more about child abuse than its incidence warrants sits ill with his apparent downgrading of some of it to mere "silly sexual play": his solution for the hysteric presumptions of St Theresa of



Cyclops: unquotably nasty

Lisieux, that "she ought to have been spanked", is at best carelessly brusque. More mundanely, his cod-behavioural description of a row in the kitchen ("the husband has disordered materials on the wife's territory") is woefully hackneyed—but if you can extrapolate from nature that "the appropriate behaviour of the female is to yield and submit", then the charge (to put this mildly) that you're not really up to speed on today's gender front cannot be far behind.

Masters' attitudes are an odd mishmash all round; he lurches



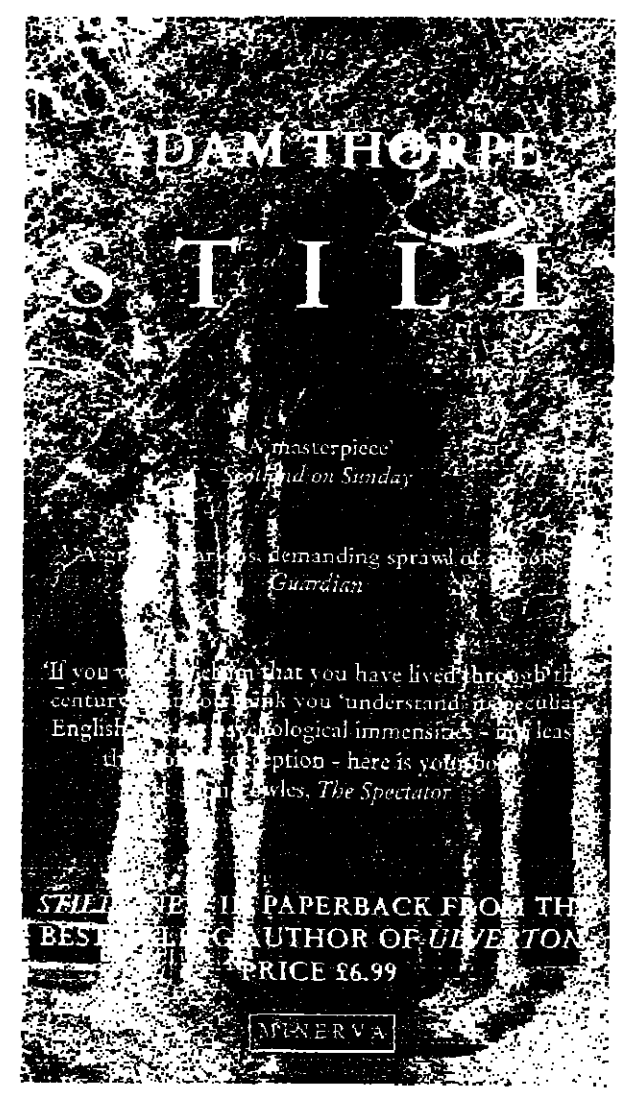
St Theresa: in need of spanking?

without blinking from the hearteningly liberal to the sweepingly obtuse. Righteously dismissive of the nastier shades of modern Conservatism, he argues passionately and persuasively that no moral system can be complete if it doesn't accord rights to animals as much as to people. Yet the next moment he's declaring that "Christianity is morally unwholesome" or making opaque remarks about the similarity between the gentlemen's clubs of London and communities of grey-lag geese.

This last has little more purpose

than to let us know he's a club member himself—and the fact that he went to the same school as Michael Caine (not to mention his fawning paragraph about Richard Branson) is similarly irrelevant to his supposed subjects, namely good and evil. As to them, he trawls through genetics, determinism, Darwin, Sartre, religion, madness and much more besides. In order to finally tell us that if we all thought a little more about what we did, the world would be a better place.

Not only incontestable, this conclusion is also bogglingly obvious—and it would bear more weight if Masters had done more thinking himself. This is a writer, however, who tells us that he finds the burning out of the Cyclops' eye in the *Odyssey* "unquotably nasty", yet who can still give us specific detail on the Wakefield man who tore his wife's face apart with his bare hands, or the Californian killer who ripped his victim's nipples off with a pair of pliers. When you can be inconsistent like that, all claims to high intent fall away; evil's just an itch, all Masters does is scratch it, and for all the results are worth. Doubleday might as well have given us the splatter-pulp package.



books

All you need to know
about the books you
meant to read



by Gavin
Griffiths

EUSTACE AND HILDA (1944-49)
by L.P. Hartley

Plot: Eustace and Hilda are brother and sister, mucking about at the seaside. Eustace finds a shrimp half-eaten by an anemone and, terminally over-sensitive, finds himself in a quandary: the problem is solved by Hilda who decisively wrenches the shrimp from its predator; as a result, both creatures perish. This incident is the emblematic leitmotif of the novel. Eustace is taken up by a fairy godmother figure, Miss Fothergill, who leaves him pots of money when she dies. He decides to share this with his sister, so that both "shrimp" and "anemone" can survive. The only blot is Eustace's heart condition. He goes to Oxford. Slightly unhinged, Hilda opens a clinic and is betrayed by a posturing, neo-fascist friend of Eustace, has a breakdown and withers in a wheelchair. Eustace comes to the rescue; but in bringing the anemone back to life, the shrimp must die...

Theme: Eustace and Hilda are locked in a stately pavane of mutual destruction that they neither can nor wish to halt. Eustace evolves into a symbol of the refined aesthetic spirit, while Hilda is the tenacious dog-gooder, a public-spirited pain in the neck.

Style: Insidiously graceful. Hartley shifts the narrative point of view and strands the reader in a state of wary apprehension.

Chief strengths: Apart from George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, no other novel offers such a devastating illumination of sibling rivalry.

Chief weakness: The half-eaten shrimp and the carnivorous anemone, a deeply off-putting symbol of the sexual act.

What they thought of it then: Hartley's chum, Lord David Cecil, speaks of the trilogy's "poignancy", "pathos", and "exquisite refinement for feeling"; he omits to stress the irony and humour.

What we think of it now: Apart from *The Go-Between*, most of Hartley's work is out of favour. He falls between the social acuity of James and the sexual poetry of Lawrence.

A cindery path out of childhood

L.P. Hartley's life moved from unexplained family trauma to cantankerous old age. Paul Binding looks for clues



Directly autobiographical: Dominic Guard (left) as the letter-carrying Leo in Losse's film version of *The Go-Between* (1970); L.P. Hartley's father (above) with his three children, Leslie, Enid (seated) and Nora. Enid was the Hilda of Hartley's Eustace and Hilda.

A member of L.P. Hartley's family, afraid he would enlist, wrote in 1915: "England is going to need just such men as Leslie presently". Born in 1895, he had a schoolboy quite unusually combined sensitivity with an ability to succeed in conventional domains. Good at both work and games, he became head boy of his public school, Harrow, from which he won an exhibition to Balliol, Oxford. And when, after a year at university, he did enlist, he acquitted himself well in the army, though he saw no active service. He returned to Oxford having been told: "You have done your utmost for king and country."

But when England became aware of Hartley, it was as a writer of novels fixated on the transition from childhood to the adult world, seen as the passage from light into darkness. His work insisted, in the most dramatic terms, that he had suffered an early trauma of such dimensions that participation in normal life was utterly impossible afterwards.

Emotional relationships and sexual relations he viewed and presented as being of their nature, destructive. By his last years, Hartley's misanthropy was all-pervading. He regarded his country as having been corrupted by too much compassion. He used his literary gifts to articulate the most terrible ideas. The English working class he called the WC, changing this, in case his point had been missed, to "the toilet". He wanted wrongdoers "literally branded, with F for forger, V for violent criminal etc" and many people hanged. Humans weren't the only object of his hatred

either. Disturbed by swans while boating on the River Avon, Hartley killed two with barbiturates wrapped in bread pellets. He died in 1972 with years of heavy drinking, "servant problems" and paranoia behind him.

What brought about this change? What darkened this clever, imaginative, well-off, indeed successful, writer's journey through life? What is the truth behind the various forms that the blighting traumas take in Hartley's best-known novels – *The Eustace and Hilda* trilogy, *The Go-Between* and *The Brickfield* – forms that support as well as conflict with each other?

Adrian Wright, as he tells us, admired Hartley's novels so greatly that their author became a hero to him. Fascinated by the sadness behind the sensibility, he set out first to explore Hartley's life and then to write it, persevering where others had turned back defeated by the dead man's friends and relations. But Wright won over Hartley's surviving sister Nora who asked: "What sort of book do you want to write?" A truthful book about Leslie, Wright said.

In this he has both succeeded and not succeeded. Wright's feeling for the writings is unflagging, as is his careful attention to them. A late-starter in full-length fiction, Hartley was very productive once under way, and in his lifetime received wide acclaim. Three publishers vied for his work because they thought him the most distinguished British novelist of the times.

He was a candidate for the Nobel Prize, and decidedly annoyed not to get it. Few post-war literary novels have had

Foreign Country:

The Life of L.P. Hartley

by Adrian Wright

André Deutsch, £17.99

a happier career than *The Go-Between* (1953) which the Pinter-scripted, Losey-directed film greatly boosted: it has with no strain survived the 24 years since Hartley's death.

Wright is good on what features his novels share and what makes each one an individual creation. He is particularly shrewd about the lesser-known works. *The Boat* (1949) for instance, Hartley's ungainly but absorbing novel of the English countryside in the Second World War, or *My Fellow Devils* (1951), a study of conventional virtue coping with the evil embodied in a film star.

The life as opposed to the work presents formidable problems, the worse for Hartley's continual implications that the latter sprang from cataclysmic happenings in the former. During the filming of *The Go-Between*, for instance, a remark of his about the "real-life" Leo would suggest the novel was directly autobiographical. And Wright is convinced, surely correctly, that *The Brickfield* (1964), where the adolescent hero has a more active initiation into sex, is more autobiographical still. But when all has been thought and said, what evidence is there for any traumas?

Wright builds up a convincing picture

of a family life of suffocating gentility, decorum and tedium: his father was a Peterborough solicitor, and a rich man through wise investment in a local brick field, while his mother and elder sister were both cripplingly narrow and interfering women. Aren't Hartley's lurid plots essentially dramatisations of wishes nurtured during those years which so squeezed all trace of rebellion and assertion out of him?

I am not even persuaded – for again so little evidence seems available – of Hartley's homosexuality. His obsessional dependence on women friends must have had an erotic element surely. We seem to be, in either respect, in very "cindery" territory here, to use one of his *alter ego* Leo's words.

It is on emotional matters that Wright is least satisfying. His determination somehow to account for so much unhappiness leads to this book's vitriolic flaw. Wright believes that Hartley's friendship with his one-time fellow under-graduate, the younger Lord David Cecil, was so intense that he never recovered from Cecil's marriage, and that Cecil was therefore guilty of a betrayal that haunted his days.

In order to flesh this out he attempts to deny David Cecil – a friend of my own for 27 years – and his wife Rachel, herself devoted to Hartley, qualities which I feel his subject would have been the first to commend. There was constant communication between the two men throughout their lives, David Cecil taking the most thoughtful and generous interest in his friend's work.

Wright doesn't suppress this – he

gives us all the facts but hedges them about with prejudiced and misleading conjecture. He also fails to do justice to what the two men shared – a Neo-Platonist life-view and literary admirations in which David Cecil was often the leader, such as those for Emily Brontë and the Jacobites which so influenced Hartley's writings. In fact this biography's very title, deriving from the opening sentence of *The Go-Between*, can itself be traced to David Cecil, who used the phrase with reference to the past in his inaugural lecture as Goldsmith's Professor in 1949. David and Rachel Cecil were sympathetically and practically concerned with Hartley in his sad last years, as Wright, who himself shows exemplary kindness in his treatment of them, relates. This makes the flaw the more regrettable.

But maybe there is another explanation for Hartley's depressions. Judged by the standards they appear to invoke, for all their formal accomplishment, his novels are ultimately unsatisfactory. *The Go-Between* amply deserves its success, with its many felicities of eye and ear, such as the schoolboys' slang and the marvellous set-piece of the cricket match and village feast, and its drama can jerk out a few tears. But it is middlebrow stuff; its psychology, morality and governing ideas cannot stand up to serious scrutiny.

For reasons we will probably never know, Hartley preferred retreat to confrontation – a chronic evasion which prevented any of the fictional metaphors for his agonised condition from ever reaching completion.

A smoked-fish treasure hunt

Hugo Barnacle celebrates publication of a rambling Russian masterpiece

Yury Dombrovsky died in Moscow in 1978, shortly after the first Russian edition of *The Faculty of Useless Knowledge* appeared in Paris. A former camp inmate who served two sentences in the Gulag for the usual reason (nothing in particular), he was rehabilitated by Khrushchev and saw some of his work issued under official Soviet imprints, but he was obliged to publish this last novel, his masterpiece, abroad.

It details an episode in the Stalinist terror of 1937. A couple of men bring some fragments of an ancient gold diadem to the city museum of Alma-Ata in Kazakhstan. They say they found the stuff on a partridge-shooting expedition. Accepting a 300-ruble reward, they disappear smartly leaving false names. The local secret police then swoop and arrest Zybin, the museum's keeper of Antiquities, for theft of socialist property, sabotage, Trotskyite activity and so on.

According to the publishers' blurb, this happens because the diadem has disappeared along with the treasure-hunters. Some confusion here is understandable, since everyone talks about "the gold floating off" and Dombrovsky's narrative, driven by dialogue, is often oblique and disjointed in a comic style oddly reminiscent of Kingsley Amis, but in fact the diadem goes nowhere except into an NKVD evidence bag.

The "missing" gold at issue is the rest of the hoard, which the museum authorities have sup-

The Faculty of Useless Knowledge
by Yury Dombrovsky
trans Alan Myers
Harvill, £15.99

posedly let slip by failing to grill the treasure-hunters properly. The NKVD claim there must have been 25 kilos at least, but they're making it up, probably on the basis of a regional quota for archaeological finds set out by some Moscow institute. In short, Zybin is charged with conspiracy to steal something which may never have existed.

They seem to pick on Zybin, who took no part in the transaction, because he was once questioned by the authorities when a student acquaintance committed suicide, and anyone who has ever been questioned is an anti-Soviet element by definition. (This was how Dombrovsky himself got into trouble.)

The NKVD captain, Neiman, Jewish and fearful for his job, wants to stage a big show trial, just like they have in Moscow, and Zybin can be made to fit the bill as an enemy agent. He was even arrested while making for the Chinese border.

This is a nice touch. We know that Zybin was really wandering up-river to buy some black-market home-smoked marinka fish, because the treasure-hunters offered some of this rare

commodity to one of the museum staff, which means the fisherman might be able to provide a lead, but if Zybin admits this to Neiman's investigators he will be admitting... conspiracy to steal socialist property, only fish instead of gold.

The bulk of the book deals with Zybin's resistance to weeks of interrogation. There is a wonderfully sinister *Alice in Wonderland* humour about the investigators' solemn attempts to build a case out of nothing, and the effect is in no way dented by Dombrovsky's insistence on portraying the secret police with a certain rich sympathy.

Being Russian, however, the story rambles quite widely. We are given chunks of a treatise one of the characters is writing on the betrayal and trial of Jesus, as in Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*. Zybin shares a cell with an old lag who memorably describes life in the Siberian camps. The old lag, a Georgian, has written to his boyhood friend, Stalin, to remind him of a small loan outstanding since 1914, and we are shown Stalin at his dacha wondering whether to sign a release form or a death warrant.

Other equally real but far less famous persons appear under their own names, among them Dombrovsky's future wife, Clara. Her presence, like that of the poplars rustling in the breeze outside the windows of the interrogation room, can be taken as a sign that the novel will not degenerate into mere black comedy. Rather, it is tragicomedy, a higher and wiser thing.

Out from Willie's shadow

Patricia Craig reads a worthy attempt at rehabilitation

The Yeats Sisters,
by Joan Hardwick,
Pandora, £8.99

Lily and Lolly sounds like a music-hall duo, but in fact the lives of WB Yeats's sisters, Susan and Elizabeth, weren't especially abundant in gaiety. They were the dogbodies of the Yeats family; indeed at one point, as their biographer is at pains to stress, it was only the income they supplied that kept things going.

The story of their father's improvidence is pretty well-known: how he abandoned the Bar for a career in portrait-painting, and shunted his family back and forth between Dublin and London, as each of these settings appeared more auspicious to him when he was out of it. While his wife (born Susan Pollexfen) withdrew increasingly into her own discontent, the other two were merely hard-working and enterprising. Lily (as Susan was always called to distinguish her from her mother) first began earning money in 1888, as an embroiderer for May Morris, daughter of William, Lolly, the younger sister, wasn't far behind her, once she'd gained a French Teaching Certificate, and acquired the confidence to produce some painting textbooks. However, the two are remembered (if at all – the most frequent descriptive term applied to them is "unsung") for setting up the Cuala Press and allied industries in Dublin in 1908. The Press which produced many first editions of their brother William's work.

The Yeats Sisters shows the over-bearing, disputatious side of WB. Joan Hardwick can't forgive him for failing to value these industri-

ous siblings more highly, though he thought well enough of Lily. Between himself and Lolly, indeed, there was constant friction: they were too alike, self-willed and difficult to form any kind of alliance. The superficially more docile Lily was his ally, while he lived at home; Jack Yeats – the youngest of the four – hardly shared in the others' precarious upbringing at all. At a time when money was particularly tight, Jack was packed off to his grandparents in Sligo; and then he married a fellow art student in London at the earliest possible moment. The Yeats girls never married at all, and indeed the entire sexual dimension in their lives is a blank, at least as far as this biography is concerned. The author hasn't come up with any more convincing suitors than an unforthcoming Trinity don (for Lolly), and the rich New York collector John Quinn (Lily) – though the latter was always on the lookout for mistresses as well as manuscripts and works of art, and didn't have to look too hard (Joan Hardwick speculates) to spot Lily Yeats's unsuitability for the role. Nevertheless, he remained a patron of the entire family until his death in 1924.

For all their talent and practicality, Lily and Lolly were never exactly New Women or even Girls of the Period, both these tags



Lily and Lolly: workaday women

implying up-to-date views and a measure of social assertiveness. Even their stand on any issue of the day can't be called enlightened, if you leave aside the question of women's employment – and that was a matter of necessity, not choice. Given the choice, we gather, they'd infinitely have preferred to be married. Their biographer can't avoid judging both of them, especially Lily, "conventional": church-going, anti-drink and shocked to the core by May Morris's carry-on with GB Shaw.

Although they settled permanently in Dublin in 1902, a time of considerable cultural and revolutionary activity, the sisters never took a firm, or a prescient, line on Irish affairs, and were at one in considering Constance Markievicz insane to wear men's clothes and involve herself in politics. And as for Maud Gonne – they'd taken against this muse of their brother's from the very first moment when

she came to call on WB at Blenheim Road in London in 1888, and looked down her nose at them, wearing a "sort of royal smile", intensely irritating. They fared no better with Lady Gregory, who took no notice of them whatever.

Joan Hardwick's aim is twofold: to bring the female Yeates from under the shadow of their brothers and father, and to stick up for Lolly, the more spirited, recalcitrant and denigrated of the two. Lily, the author tells us, must take some blame for the unadmirable view of her sister which has persisted through various writings about the Yeats family; living longer (until 1949) enabled her to cast herself, without fear of contradiction, in the better light.

Hardwick has made a good job of reinstating Lolly, whose prickliness and impatience strike a contemporary note; but she hasn't shown any special insight into the background or psychology of her subjects. However, it does bring home to us the extent of the sisters' achievement in the face of such obstacles as a shaky education, uncertain social standing, superior brother, gadabout father, and no outstanding personal attractions. *The Yeats Sisters* is a workmanlike account of two workaday women.

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مكتبة الأمل

gardening

Your garden is on top of a roof. How do you turn it into a jungle?

WORKSHOP Anna Pavord's garden problem solver

"I am the proud owner of a roof terrace measuring roughly 17 feet x 13 feet," began Pamela Danvers. "It is open to the north, overlooking the District and Piccadilly lines which are out in the open here, running from West Kensington station. The south and half of the east side are sheltered by an eight-foot-high, zinc-covered wall which runs up to the roof; the west side is brick, about 10 feet up to the eaves, and the remaining half of the east abuts the next-door (apparently unused) terrace which is separated from mine by some netting, rising to a height of about six feet."

I have inherited from the previous owner various bits and pieces in the way of window boxes and small tubs with (mostly) unidentified things growing in them, and brought with me an avocado, three bonsai citrus trees grown from pips - which are at least five years old and have always done well outside (though that was in Buckinghamshire) - and a cyclamen.

I fancy living in a jungle (although it may have to be Himalayan rather than equatorial) and intend to put up some baskets on the brick wall, and grow ivy over the railings, but what would you do?"

Some problems are common to all roof gardens. Turbulence is one of the worst, but Ms Danvers's roof garden was cosier than most I have seen, as it is walled round on three sides. It faces north, but there are advantages in that. Shade is usually difficult to arrange on a roof-garden but this one, with shadows cast by the relatively high walls around it, had its own built-in shade. That would make growing good foliage plants easier, for Ms Danvers's dream of a jungle could not be achieved without introducing a lot of leaf into the place.

This roof garden, though, had some particular problems of its own. The sheets of metal that wall in the terrace on the north- and west-facing sides get very hot in summer and are inhospitably chilly in winter. There seemed to be no way of fixing any plant supports to their smooth surfaces. Similarly, the guttering did not look stable enough to support a hanging net of chicken wire. Then there was the surface of the flat roof, which looked like a layer of tar, painted with a silvery, light reflecting paint. The colour was sufficiently faded not to draw too much attention to itself, but Ms Danvers had found that pots of any weight scored and marked the surface (it may have softened in the occasional summer heat). She was concerned that water might find its way through these grooves and into her flat below. On the other hand, she did not want to do what her surveyor had recommended: resurface the entire roof garden.

She had found that by standing pots on spare cork tiles, she could get round the problem of marking the roof's surface. She had also managed to get an old table, four-feet square, on to the roof, and her photographs show that this had been a very successful focus of the roof garden display last summer. She filled the entire surface of the table with pots of petunias, bought cheap from the Columbia Road market, breaking them up with pots of striped spider plants, which, together with other houseplants, such as waxy crassulas, spend their summers outside.

Ms Danvers had also had great success with seed saved from a bag of red peppers she had bought in Berwick Street market. She had sown them in clutches of three to five seeds in five-inch pots, let one seedling grow on, and been rewarded with a remarkable harvest. I was rather jealous of those, having failed miserably with my own peppers last year.

My general impression, standing on the roof was that it had great potential, but that there were too many small containers and not enough big ones. This is easy to say when you are not the person humping the pots (and the compost to fill them) up three flights of vertiginous stairs. It also seemed that Ms Danvers could build on the success of her massed table-top display by creating massed effects in other areas of the roof terrace.

To do this, she needs to import more greenery, which could act as a foil and a background for the flowers which she has already learnt can grow surprisingly well in her eyrie among the chimneys. Photographs show tobacco plants, foxgloves and pansies flowering, but looking a little lost and naked against a backdrop of sky, brick, sheet-metal and chimneys.

Three evergreens in matching pots, placed along the north-facing wall, would soften the effect of the sheet-metal and give an impression of a well-furnished space. They would also create a backdrop more evanescent annuals or bulbs in smaller pots, which could be shunted in and out in season and placed in front of the evergreens. Because the roof garden is shady and not too exposed, I would be inclined to experiment with camellias or bay trees, bottom heavy pyramids rather than top heavy mops. Both plants take very happily to life in pots, and camellias in this location would not be exposed to early-morning sunshine in spring.

The best wall for displaying plants was undoubtedly the brick one, formed for the most part by the chimney-breast of the adjoining house. The bricks, yellowish London stock, had



Great potential but too many containers: Pamela Danvers in her roof garden

Photograph: Tony Buckingham

a pleasing texture. The table takes up the whole central section of this wall, but to the right was a clear stretch on which you could train an evergreen wall-shrub, to provide extra leafiness. Only foliage could give the feeling that this roof is a luxurious, properly furnished space and provide a sympathetic backdrop for flowers.

The brick wall, however, faced east, opposite the only open section of the east side of the roof-garden, straight into the teeth of potentially harsh winds. Whatever was to grow there would need to be tough, and planted in a container big enough to remain stable. Loam compost helps, as it is much heavier than soilless types. It dries out less quickly too. Paradoxically, evergreens in this kind of situation are often more at risk in winter than in summer, because few people think of watering in winter, although winds can be as drying as the summer sun.

Pyracantha - easy to train, hardy, evergreen and equally good in flower or fruit - is my first choice and would display itself well against the

brickwork. Vine eyes would be the neatest way of tying it securely to the wall. 'Orange Glow' does well on an east wall in our garden and is still covered with brilliant orange-red berries in March. Pyracantha rogersiana has sweet smelling flowers and the 'Flava' variety bears lovely milky yellow berries, but it is not always as reliably evergreen as 'Orange Glow'.

The four horizontal bars of the iron railings and four long and narrow concrete troughs, which Ms Danvers had inherited from the previous owners, stretch along the open north-facing side of the roof-terrace. She had fixed chicken-wire along the bottom of the railings, to provide support for plants and to stop pots blowing overboard through the gaps. This was where she was thinking of growing ivy.

That is certainly a possibility, but before long the ivy would fill the concrete boxes with matted roots, and Ms Danvers would have to use other pots for her flowers. Given that this was the only open aspect, I felt that ivy might cre-

ate a claustrophobic atmosphere and suggested growing a mass of sweetpeas in the troughs. Their tendrils might not be strong enough to keep them upright, but with some judicious tying in, you could get round that. The seeds could be sown directly into the concrete boxes, but the plants would need extra feeding through the summer.

Ms Danvers hadn't been sorry to leave behind her garden in Buckinghamshire. "Too much mowing," she said, and being rather more interested in houseplants than gardens, felt the roof terrace an appropriate compromise. She evidently likes growing things from seeds and pips, and may build on her triumph with the peppers and try some tomatoes this year. A bush variety such as 'Tumbler' would get round the need for staking, and they, at least, might benefit from the reflected heat of the metal walls. At the cost of only a slight crack in the neck, travellers on the District and Piccadilly lines can keep an eye on their progress.

gardening

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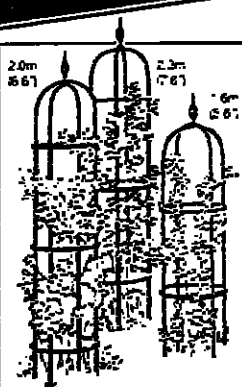
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Why snails love city gardens best

By Caroline Donald

Look in any glossy magazine or coffee-table design book and the smart accessory for your garden is a piece of topiary.

Ranging from a plain ball or cone to more whimsical shapes such as teddy bears and peacocks, topiary brings formality and focus to even the smallest of garden spaces. Given the regularity of its appearance as the must-have for the fashionable garden, one would expect a corresponding ubiquity in availability. Not so.

Despite our heritage of exquisite and eccentric topiary gardens - Levens Hall, Cumbria; Avebury Manor, Wiltshire and Great Dixter, East Sussex for example - the world topiary market is now led by growers in Holland and Italy. Dutch topiary, like its English counterpart, uses box and yew and tends towards classic shapes, while the Italians use a small-leaf privet that is not very hardy in our climate, which allows them to go in for the showy stuff - butterflies and birds with intricate patterns on their wings and tennis racquets, for example.

Enter Elizabeth Brambridge, a woman with the foresight to anticipate the present demand. Ten years ago, she gave up her City job in order to spend more time travelling with her husband, Mark, a surgeon on the international circuit. At the same time, she rented some land in Hampshire from a business associate and started the Langley Boxwood Nursery. A decade later, she is the leading topiary grower and sup-

plier in Britain, counting the National Trust, Hampton Court and the Marquis of Bath among her customers.

It is far easier to make a quick buck on bedding plants and perennials which have a high turnover, rather than have expensive land turned over to bushes that can take 10-15 years to grow big enough to create a large piece of topiary. "Most nurseries have stopped even growing hedging box," says Mrs Brambridge, which explains why it is so expensive - up to £300 for a large bush.

Langley Nursery has a mixture of home-grown plants and those imported from Holland and nurtured on to appropriate size. Three-tiered pom-pom bushes, obelisks, spirals, cubes and pyramids stand in serried ranks while, in another part of the nursery, there are larger pieces such as Greek urns and a "royal crown" (a classic topiary shape). Teddy bears, pigs and dogs are also popular.

Another reason for the high costs of topiary is that demand always exceeds supply. "The problem is making sure that you can supply the bigger schemes," says Mrs Brambridge. "What surprises us is the demand for size. We have a perpetual search for great big balls of box or yew, as well as columns and obelisks. The big schemes ask for 100 of a particular shape, but there probably aren't 100 species in existence." She recently supplied 35,000 hedging box plants, which all had to be the same colour, for the *parterre* in the

restored privy garden at Hampton Court Palace. The next big project is the hedging for an erotic "Love Maze" commissioned by the Marquis of Bath at Longleat, Wiltshire.

For those of us with less ambition, and rather less space to spare than the Marquis of Bath, a piece of potted topiary (Langley sells mini standards from £10) on the patio adds a touch of class and has the advantage of being both evergreen and low-maintenance, needing only a spring clipping which gives the plant a chance to releaf during the rest of the season. And, for those with time to spare, you can grow your own.

Mrs Brambridge reckons that a small spiral should take about 18 months to get going from an existing bush. Carpentry skills and a good eye for balance and design are handy - one of her cutters was previously a hairdresser. Contrary to general belief, you grow the bush to a decent size and then cut and train it back to shape, rather than grow it into the training wires and rods. Carpentry skills and a good eye for balance and design are the skills required. "They look horrid when you start off," says Mrs Brambridge, "but you've got to be brave." A newly cut teddy bear with a cane up its back and branches wired to its paws is not a pretty sight, but in a few months, it will have regained its dignity.

Langley Boxwood Nursery, Rake, Nr Liss, Hampshire (GU17 30) 894467



WEEKEND WORK

Have you pruned the Buddleia? Tidied up the winter jasmine? Dealt with the climbing roses? If the answer is "Well, I did mean to, but...", sharpen up your secateurs and get to work. Buddleia flowers adequately if it is not pruned but it quickly becomes too big for its boots. Be ruthless - cut last year's growth to just above where it started. If you get a mound of butchered stumps about three feet high, you will have done a good job.

Jasmine requires more care. It is best trained high up a wall and allowed to fall forward. The wood to keep is the long, bright green stuff. Encourage new green growth by cutting out a proportion of the old stems entirely.

Climbing roses can be pruned on a replacement principle. If strong new stems arise near the base, cut back the older part of the stems above the point where the new shoot rises. Tie in new growth securely.

With wisteria, you can finish the job you should have started last July. Unwanted new growth should have been cut back by half. Now, you cut those same shoots back to within two buds of the point where the new growth started. It's a wobbly ladder job. Our wisteria keeps diving under the eaves into the roof space and I haul out yards of peaky-looking growth that has been wandering around under the tiles looking for the light.

مركز الأمل

There's a fight over the River Wye: conservationists want to preserve the peace; developers see its business potential

By Michael Prestage



Conservation versus pleasure boats on the Wye
Photo: Rob Stratton

For centuries the River Wye has attracted thousands of visitors, drawn by its great scenic and natural beauty. In 1798 William Wordsworth penned *Lines Composed A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey* during a visit to the river. "How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee, O Wye! though wanderer through the woods," he wrote.

Unfortunately, in recent years more and more people have turned to the Wye—a river of major importance for conservation because it has a largely natural regime and has remained free from pollution.

Their interest has often extended beyond sitting on its banks, notepad in hand, composing poetry. While the river still attracts walkers, it also numbers canoeists, rafters, and pleasure-boat owners among its regulars. And its status as a salmon river brings game fishermen willing to spend a pretty pound in pursuit of their sport.

Until now, the disparate devotees of the river have co-existed in an uneasy truce. But the seemingly dry topic of navigation rights has shattered that peace.

There are two bids for the navigation rights, which convey a stake in the management of the river—power is shared with the National Rivers Authority (NRA), the national guardian of the aqueous environment, which has limited powers to make by-laws for the river.

One bid is from the NRA itself, which

sees such a move as a natural extension of its present powers. The other contender is a group of businessmen seeking to revive an old company, incorporated by Parliament in 1809, The Company of Proprietors of the Rivers Wye and Lugg Navigation and Horse Towing Path.

Now lawyers are being hired and history books scoured as both sides pursue their case. The NRA is accused by its critics of being in cahoots with the landed gentry who have the fishing rights and want to preserve the status quo. Those wishing to revive the ancient company and develop the river commercially are seen as get-rich-quick interlopers.

Sporting organisations are assessing which lobby will best favour their vested interests. For instance, the river hosts the annual 100-mile River Wye Charity Raft Race, the longest event of its kind in the world, and those who organise it want to be allowed to continue.

Below Hay-on-Wye, down to the Severn Estuary at Chepstow, there are 100 miles of free navigation on the river. But moves are afoot to impose regulations.

The NRA points to conflicts of interest that have arisen between various user groups such as canoeists, rafters and anglers. It argues that without controls "there is a risk that recreational use of the river will conflict with nature conservation and damage the environment or disturb wildlife."

Dr John Stoner, NRA regional gen-

eral manager, said: "The River Wye and its catchment is a river system of great importance. We must safeguard its unique character. We believe this is the right time to try to secure the balanced use of the river for the benefit of this and future generations."

It is a view echoed by conservation groups, including English Nature and the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), who both back the NRA's attempt to take on the navigation rights. Ray Woods, an area officer for the CCW, said the navigation rights were a complex issue, but there would certainly be concern if the towing path company's proposals to introduce weirs and locks were to be implemented.

"The river has Site of Special Scientific Interest status, and there are proposals to re-notify the Wye in the new Wildlife and Countryside Act and pave the way for it to be the first river in Britain to be made a Special Area of Conservation."

"The River Wye is special for a whole host of reasons. It supports rare species, including two types of shad, the Allis and the Twait, and because no impermeable barriers have been introduced, and there has been no pollution, it is one of the most natural rivers in Britain," he said.

Conservationists are happy that the River Wye is not inundated with visitors. As regards boating and tourism it has not been extensively marketed, but that could change. Critics of those with a more commercial approach to the

river fear "another Richmond on Thames".

And those involved with the towing path company believe that the river could be better exploited commercially. Installing locks and weirs, and dredging, would open the river up to pleasure boats as far as Hay-on-Wye and bring valuable tourism revenue.

The NRA has taken legal action to have the towing path company bid overturned, while at the same time embarking on a public consultation exercise before proceeding with its own legal claim to the rights. The first round in the fight went to the NRA after High Court proceedings were taken against Mr Victor Stockinger, a New Zealand lawyer who is handling the towing path company claim. The Court did not support Mr Stockinger's claim to act as "governor" of the old company.

However, the search is on by those backing the towing path company to find the old shares, and they are confident the first legal setback will be overturned. Both parties were due back in court last month (Feb 15) to hear an appeal by Mr Stockinger against the ruling.

Des Davies, landlord of a Hereford pub and a prime mover behind the company, said: "We decided to revive the company because the river is dying. Salmon numbers are falling because the river is silting up. As a child I can remember catching eels when the river was black with them. They have disappeared now."

He said the river was navigable to vessels up to 1856. A cider mill at Bredwardene was built with stone brought up river by barge. Research has shown, he claims, that locks existed on the river. "We don't want to damage the environment, but we do want to breathe new life back into the river."

If the company can be revived it hopes to build 22 locks and weirs. Its backers believe that the tourism the company will attract will create 1,000 jobs along the river.

Those supporting the bid include Hereford City Council, which believes that the city and its riverside environs would benefit, and investors are standing by to finance it.

Charles Willis, the council's chief executive, said: "We are opposed to the idea of the NRA becoming the navigable authority because it wants to suppress navigation. The Wye is a dreadfully wasted resource. Once Hereford built ocean-going ships. Now it is impossible to reach the ocean because there is so little water."

The council sees economic development as a spin-off for the area. "We would like to see people navigate the river in pleasure boats, stop overnight and spend money here. We think this could be done without environmental damage," Mr Willis said.

The legal fight is certain to continue. In the meantime, those who use the river for pleasure and profit will have to try and get along until a statutory control is established.

COUNTRY PURSUITS



Will O'Leary, stonemason based at Knucklas, Powys

"I get out of bed at 8am and take a cup of coffee into my study. I design most of my commissions and like to spend a whole week doing the drawings before going to the workshop. I have three headstones on the go at the moment. They all have to be drawn out, executed and fixed at the site."

"All the carving and lettering is done by hand. For some masonry, I use a compressor and pneumatic chisels, but I prefer to work with my bare hands. Horrible modern monumental masons use machines; computer-generated letters on a stencil, applied to the stone and sand-blasted. They never do anything by hand at all."

"If I use a lot of a particular stone then I go to the quarry—I like to check it's top quality. I was using so much Forest of Dean sandstone for the restoration work on Kingsland Church in Herefordshire, I went to meet the quarrymen. It's interesting to find out about the geology of stone. In masonry, you should know about your material: you need to know its compressive strength. Some stone even smells: Portland stone has a lovely fishy smell, but Forest of Dean smells pretty horrible—a nasty, musty odour."

"Every commission is a one-off. I always think I would like another job, like the Mary Morgan memorial, for example. She was an early 19th-century woman hanged for the murder of her new-born son. The original stone was falling apart and I had to do an exact replica. That was fascinating—it is very difficult to do a faithful copy: even though you are tracing it, you can never get the spirit of the original cutter. Many of my jobs are memorials, which I do in my workshop. Then I go to the cemetery to fix the head stone with my wife and baby daughter."

"If I am doing a church restoration, I have to be on site, which means up the scaffold. I did a local church last winter. I took a few days off when it was snowing, but otherwise I worked through the elements. In the summer, it's lovely up a scaffold. I especially enjoyed Bath Abbey—a great view."

The most interesting job I did was building the Memorial Pagoda at Milton Keynes in memory of a Buddhist monk. I wasn't under any time pressures and designed a lot of the detail, but now I have a family I don't like to go off for weeks on end."

"I tend to knock off at 7 or 8 in the summer and 6.30 in the winter. You can't work late into the night—it takes too much concentration. And I don't like working more than eight hours in a day. I get too exhausted. A lot of it depends on light in the workshop—in the winter especially. You can't do lettering in bad light."

"Once a week we run an evening class for six or seven people to do carving. In the summer, we run weekend courses. They are knackered and a bit annoying because people always do nicer things than I get to do. I would like to take my own course so I could do exactly what I wanted."

"I love my work. I really do. It can get a bit exasperating, but then anything gets tiring if you do it for too long. Even thinking about it makes me excited, but by bedtime I am so worn out. I simply pass out."

Bel Crewe

A little local trouble

This has not been a happy week for two of Scotland's island communities. The residents of Graemesay, in the Orkneys, are in a fighting mood after council members voted to axe the island's only school. The closure of Graemesay School will mean that its lone pupil, nine-year-old Kevin Pepper, will now have to travel by ferry to school in Stromness on the mainland. This week the news was announced that production problems have delayed a new ferry service.

On Eigg, it is the plight of the island's cattle that has infuriated the locals. On Tuesday the island's owner Maruma, sold all the remaining beasts bar one—Barney the Limousin Bull, father of nearly all the island's cattle. Poor Barney failed to sell because of missing papers and will go under the hammer at a later date. For Eigg islanders the sale was a tragedy. Stockman Donald McFadyen told *The Herald*: "I don't know how they will adapt to the climate in other parts of the country." Now residents fear this is the start of something more sinister and rumours of an island clearance are rife.

'Was I witnessing a high-level wife-swap?'

This is the season when birds and animals stake out breeding territories and none of our resident species make more noise about it than the buzzards. The other evening, whistles burst out from both sides of the valley. The first calls rang from the wood on the hill to the south, my right, instantly answered by others from my left. Seconds later a big, dark shape floated over from the south, black against the sky. Then a second appeared from the north. A pair coming together? Apparently not like ships in the night, the two passed each other and carried on without the least deviation. Was I witnessing a high-level wife-swap?

Then two birds soared out over the southern skyline, wheeling in circles. Suddenly another pair appeared low over my head. Cries blasted off from every direction. A fifth bird started calling from somewhere behind me. The squeals of little owls were drowned out by the piercing volleys from overhead. Not until darkness fell did the big hawks at last settle and fall silent. Almost as vocifer-



DUFF HART-DAVIS

erous are the carrion crows, the most voracious predators of other birds' eggs and fledglings. Every morning crows take up vantage points and proclaim their local supremacy with loud, harsh calls.

On land patrolled by gamekeepers, the habit is often their undoing, for it enables the keeper to pinpoint their nesting sites. One man I know keeps the stuffed skin of a fox especially for this purpose: set out in a field a short distance from the edge of a wood, the bright russet decoy proves an irresistible lure. Cruising crows swoop down to mob it, and the keeper, lurking in a hide with his shotgun, picks them off one by one.

So effective is the fox, in

fact, that helps frequently borrow it, and it whizzes about the country with a mobility it never achieves in life. By such means, keepers can ensure that their own ground will be clear for the critical months in which game birds breed, because at a certain point, all surviving crows settle down to nest in whatever territories they occupy and no more cross-country movement takes place.

It is not only the predators that move around. Even humble rabbits seem to migrate about now, moving down out of the woods, in which they have spent the winter, to breed in the hedgerow burrows which form their summer homes.

The only creatures which seem hell-bent on staying put are the greylag geese on our neighbour's farm. In past years one or two pairs have arrived in February and bred on the lake in the valley; then, come autumn, they have taken off for wintering grounds elsewhere.

Last summer, however, they seemed to find conditions so congenial that they never left. Three pairs of parents raised a total of 13

goslings, so that by August there were 19 hefty birds devouring the grass and messing up the fields with their slimy droppings. The longer they stayed, the more irritated the farmer became, but being fond of all wildlife, he could not bring himself to shoot them.

There they remained throughout the winter, and now, as the mating urge comes on them, chaos reigns in the flock. The ganders are constantly demonstrating—hissing, thrashing their wings, shaking their heads and extending their necks in menacing fashion—and it is hard to see how so many geese are going to settle down in one relatively small area: there are not enough individual territories to go round.

No doubt nature will sort things out somehow. It may be that, if the birds are all closely related anyway, this year's eggs will prove infertile and produce no offspring. Should that happen, migratory instincts will probably reassert themselves, and autumn will once again see the geese on their way.

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Fancy seeing you here

Sean Thomas felt curiously at home in Java: he found a volcano, a walled city and his local supermarket manager

Twenty miles north of the ancient Javanese capital of Jogjakarta, 500 miles east of the Asian entrepot of Jakarta, halfway up Gunung Merapi – the sacred Javanese "fire mountain" – I walked into a small, dark, fly-blown bar and ran into the manager of my local Sainsbury's, in Jelington.

I hadn't planned this; the world just keeps getting smaller. And it was pretty lucky, in a way. For ages I had wondered why Sainsbury's hadn't knocked through a door to the car park. Here, in this lamplit, wood-paneled bar – full of the aromas of frying chilli and fresh coconut milk, waiting in from the street-side eating-stalls (*warungs*) – I got the chance to find out.

The brooding volcano under which we drank and chatted is reputed to be the most active spot in the furiously volcanic archipelago that is Indonesia. She more than lives up to her fearsome reputation. The manager of our hotel (the Vogel, clean and spartan, 8000 rupiah, or four pounds, a night), had told us that to climb the Old Lady we'd have to be up pretty early. Struggling out of bed before dawn we donned our hiking-boots and rucksacks and set off in the direction of the wispy summit. We got as far as the roadblock. Gunung Merapi had woken up with a nasty hangover; she was angrily puffing out clouds of lethal sulphur gas, and coughing up the odd half-ton lava bomb – and I suspect she was in no mood to see a couple of scruffy Brits crawling all over her. Three-quarters of a mile from the main ascent the police turned us back, for our own safety. We didn't really mind: standing on the special viewing-platform we could hear the rumbles of imminent eruption. It was enough.

We hailed one of the Indonesian public minibuses (*bemos*), which are cheap, packed, slow, and plentiful, and travelled into the serene, sprawling, historical city of Jogjakarta ("Jogja" to locals and aficionados). Jogja is the backpacking capital of Java, where discerning Aussies, and others doing the Asian trails tend to congregate, in preference to madcap Jakarta, or touristy Bali. The food here is cheap and good; the hotels are cheap and quite good; there's a legion of services that have sprung up to cater for the non-package traveller – airline agencies, change houses, authentic craft and batik shops. Most of these are situated in the Soro area, near the station.

South of Soro lies the ancient centre of the city-state, the sultan's court, or *Kraton*. Here

between 1750 and 1950 the gamelan-playing, dagger-wearing upper classes of Java honed their culture to an exquisite edge; the place still has a slightly superior, aristocratic air. The sultan's palace and parliament – his real power was taken away in the 1940s, after the Indonesians threw off the Dutch yoke – is a disappointing sight. It looks like your grandmother's bungalow just outside Newquay, and the gaudy railings and multi-coloured chandeliers are unmistakably nouveau. The surrounding area is more interesting – a walled-off royal city wherein live the courtiers who spend their days glorifying the sultan and his lovely sultana. Lots of the dwellings in this area have cages full of songbirds hanging outside the front door. Walking down one of the flowery alleyways the music of the birds fills your ears – a sweet, liquid lullaby.

The absence of obvious religious buildings in the walled city exposes one of the peculiarities of Indonesian life. The country – all 1,900,000 square miles of it – is said to be 90 per cent Muslim. But Indonesia has adopted a very mild form of the faith, in deference to its Christian and animist peoples, and its Buddhist background. Take a half-hour *bemo*-ride from central Jogja to Borobudur, and you can see how deeply rooted the old faith is. Borobudur is a huge Buddhist temple that sits amidst the rainy green lushness of coffee fields like an enormous grey cowpat. Carved in the eighth century, this lava-stone temple is said to be the third greatest Buddhist monument in the world, after Cambodia's Angkor Wat and Burma's Pagan. I don't know about the bronze-medal rating: it's certainly a calming, spiritual place. I spent a whole day marvelling at Borobudur's delicate sculptures, climbing its vertiginous steps, dodging its sapphire-blue dragonflies, and watching the thunder and lightning play across the dark mountain-scape to the west.

Between Jogjakarta and Jakarta lies the real Java: green, beautiful, volcanic, superfertile, chocker with people.

Everywhere you look – if you aren't looking at palm groves and banyan trees and water buffaloes and torrential rivers of milk-chocolate brown water – you can see people tilling the fields in black upside-down-saucer hats, or picking tea, or whipping cows, or bicycling home from work: from the silversmiths, or the woodcarvers, or the Japanese motorbike factory.



Gunung Merapi, the sacred Javanese "fire mountain"

Photograph: Robert Harding



SIMON CALDER

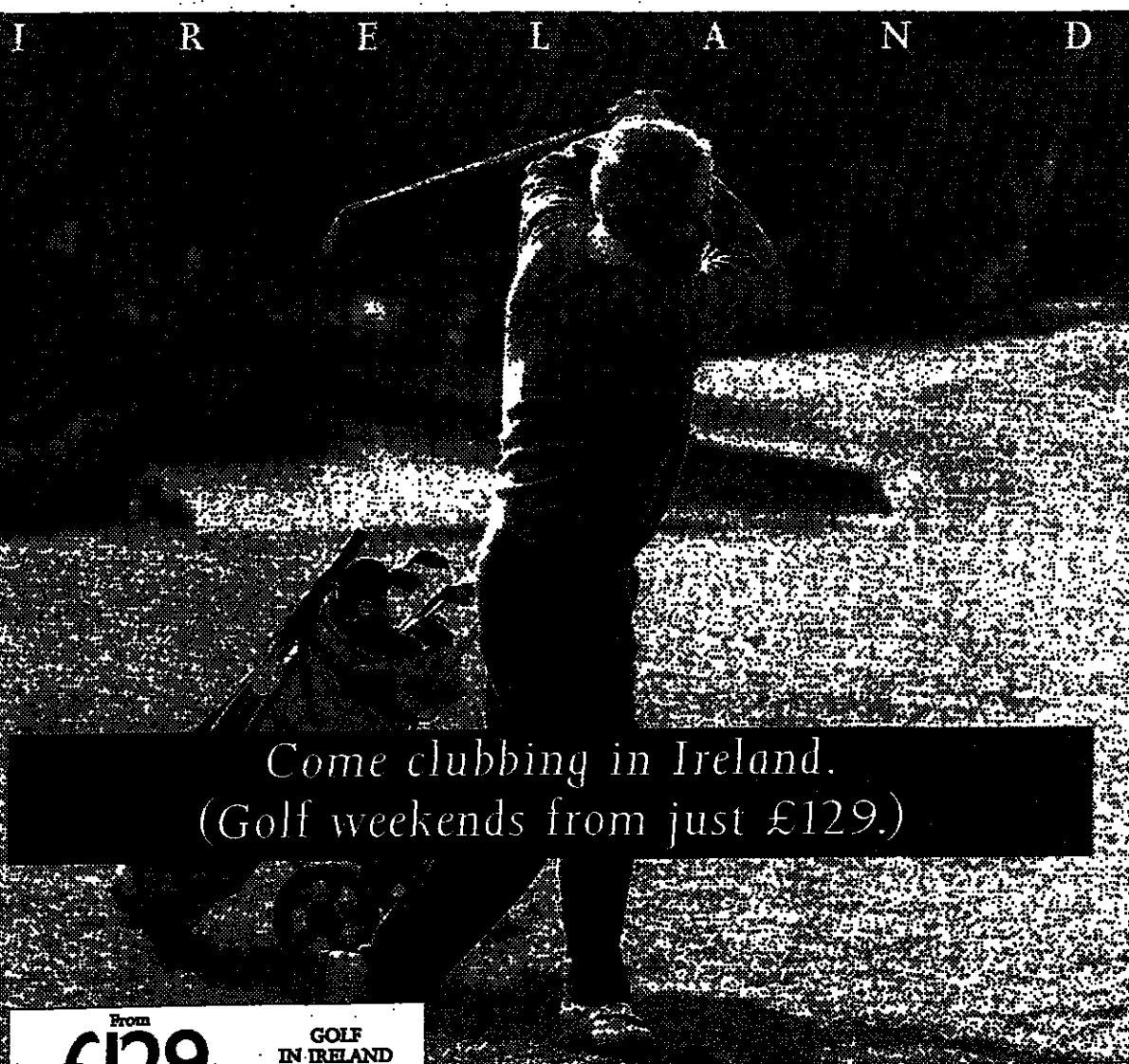
Buy a seat-only deal on a charter flight. And you may get more than just a ticket. Often the tour operator will issue an accommodation voucher, to maintain the fiction that you are being sold an inclusive holiday rather than simply a cheap flight. You are not expected to take up the offer. On a Thomson charter to Athens, I arrived at the allocated hotel and asked to be shown to my room. Instead, I was shown two things: first, the notice threatening heavy "service charges"; second, the door.

It appears I was lucky to be given accommodation in the correct country, let alone the right city. Richard Madge of Bexhill writes with an inside story. He used to work in telephone sales for a tour operator whose policy was to discourage uptake completely. To this end, he was told to supply accommodation "at a campsite 400 miles away across the Slovakian border in the Tatra mountains." Anyone who persisted was warned of "unspecified charges for linen, washing facilities, etc." Mr Madge never heard any complaints from returned customers, and supposes they are still stuck halfway up a central European mountain. The practice, as far as he is aware, continues.

This week TWA joined the ranks of smoke-free airlines between Britain and the United States. Robert Breckman of London writes to suggest that no-children flights are the obvious next step. "Having been subjected to a cacophony of screaming babies on two recent flights, it is surely intolerable that the majority should be held at the vocal mercy of the minority. Parents seem incapable of controlling their infants and blatantly refuse to take any action against the noise."

Mr Breckman accepts that his view may not be universally popular, but says he would be prepared to pay a premium to travel in peace.

Holiday bargains, as Jeremy Skidmore says overleaf, may be in shorter supply this summer than last. But reassurance that Britain's travel industry offers the best value in Europe arrives from Prague. An entrepreneur has combined the cheap coach trip between the Czech capital and London with a standard First Choice package to the Gambia. So if all the sunbeds at your resort have already been reserved by Kafka novels, you'll know why.



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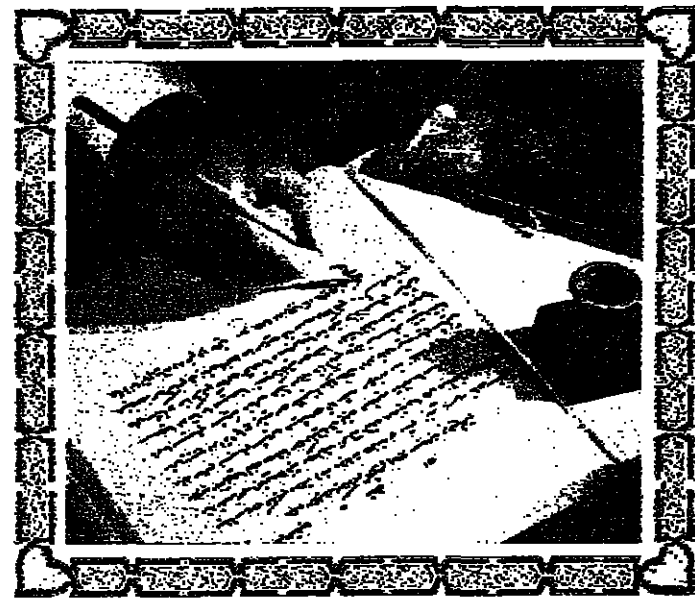
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While inflation has for many years routinely devastated the value of British fixed-interest securities, making gilts a dismal risk, in Germany government bonds have paid an above-inflation rate in every single year since 1950 — a remarkable record

Is there anything to the idea that financial markets tend to take on the national characteristics of their people, rather as dog-lovers are said to grow to resemble their owners? It is an intriguing thought, and one that may have more than a grain of truth in it. Is it really a coincidence, for example, that the biggest, most enthusiastic and most technologically advanced stock market of them all is to be found in the United States, where Wall Street — cranes and all — stands as a monument to the unbounded self-confidence and economic dynamism of Americans? Or that the most easily manipulated of world's major financial markets are to be found in Japan, a country where conformity and face are accorded so much greater value than in the more individualistic cultures of Europe and the United States?

The idea that you can discern something of national character in the behaviour of a country's markets is prompted by another of the fascinating long-term studies of stock and bond market performance produced by the stock-brokers BZW.

A few weeks ago, I commented on their popular annual UK gilts/equity study, which showed (among other things) that our bond and stock markets tend to do best when inflation and growth are both moderate by historical standards. It is excess

— in either direction, down as well as up — that British investors really cannot stand.

Now BZW have produced a similar statistical exercise on the German markets, which brings out graphically the very different qualities of the two nations, and also highlights the different economic preoccupations of the two countries. Everybody knows that the German economy has been much more successful than ours since the end of the war.

The single most potent indicator of their superior economic performance is felt daily by anybody who needs to exchange their pounds for marks. With some momentary exceptions, such as 1980/1, the pound has fallen steadily against the mark for most of the last 30 years. It is now, mainly thanks to our inferior record on inflation, worth less than a quarter of what it was a generation ago. The strength of the mark is in turn a tribute to the legendary vigilance and toughness of the Bundesbank, the German central bank, which adopts a most thorough-going aversion to anything that threatens the value of its national currency. The easy-going, "what-the-hell" attitude that Britain displays towards the value of its currency is anathema in Germany.

So how do you think the German stock and bond markets have performed over the post-war period? Well, the answers, as



JONATHAN DAVIS
INVESTMENTS

BZW documents, are mostly exactly what you would expect. German investors are exceptionally risk-averse and their financial system is heavily biased towards bank rather than equity finance. As a result the German stock market remains much smaller, relative to the size of the economy, and also less liquid than its counterparts in the UK or the US. The bond market by contrast is much more well developed.

The combination of a strong currency, relatively low inflation and risk-averse investors is reflected in the habits and performance of the main asset classes in Germany. Here are some of BZW's conclusions, based on their analysis of post-war market behaviour.

1) Although German shares over the whole period since 1945 have done better for investors than bonds, this is almost entirely due to the dramatic rerating of the equity market that occurred in the 10 years after the end of the Second World War, when the German economy was effectively

rebuilt from scratch with astonishing speed and efficiency. Company profits grew at an exceptional rate throughout this period.

2) Since 1960, however, bonds in Germany have actually produced a higher annual return than equities. While inflation has for many years routinely devastated the value of British fixed-interest securities, making gilts a dismal risk, in Germany government bonds have paid an above-inflation interest rate in every single year since 1950 — a remarkable record.

3) The upshot is that, while shares in both countries have produced similar rates of return after inflation (6-7 per cent), the divergence in government stocks has been much more marked.

While German gilts have averaged an impressive 4 per cent real rate of return since the war, the comparable British figure is a shaming zero per cent. The moral seems to be that if a German government offers to borrow from you, buy its debt issues. Unlike its British equivalent, it may actually be worth the paper it is printed on.

4) While the German stock market is now heavily influenced by the behaviour of other world markets, the primary influences on the German bond market are the relevant economic "fundamentals" — what is happening to German inflation and how the Bundesbank is running monetary policy. The rest of the world may shape German share prices, but it is Germany that shapes everyone else's interest rates.

It is small wonder, given all this, that German investors have historically preferred to keep their money in secure, fixed-interest securities, whereas Britons have been more inclined to put their money, directly or indirectly, into shares. Buying shares in Germany is still a relatively expensive business, and although it is beginning to change, it will be a long time before ordinary Germans overcome what BZW calls their extreme "risk-aversion" to equity investment. Such things don't change overnight.

Nevertheless, the big story of the 1990s may yet well prove to be how rapidly many of the old certainties in investment behaviour are changing. It is not just that Germans are beginning to buy more shares and Britons more gilts, though both are true. There are also clear signs of stress emerging in the German economy, and many who fear

that European monetary union, if it happens, will pose a real threat to the traditional sovereignty of the Bundesbank over European interest rates.

BZW also points out that the profile of German society is changing. Middle-aged Germans today are less haunted by the memories of the hyperinflation of the 1920s and the war than earlier generations. Many are also now starting to inherit the fruits of the wealth that their parents made in the years of the so-called post-war economic miracle. Their attitudes to risk are also easing.

All this creates the conditions in which Germany may start to learn to love shares and wean itself from its traditional love affair with bonds — just as many people in this country are beginning to believe that inflation here may after all have been faked. Comparison of the two BZW studies shows that the UK gilts market has actually more often than not produced a slightly higher real rate of return than its German counterpart since the early 1980s.

In investment terms, that is a real turn up for the books. It certainly would have been unthinkable 20, 30 or even 40 years ago. Even so, it will be a brave person who bets against the pound continuing its long-run decline against the mark. To do so would, after all, display a most uncharacteristic patriotic fervour.

Looking for long-term growth?

Then investment trust opportunities might be for you. By Bill Fowler

Split-capital investment trusts have two elements. They consist of income shares, which receive all the income, have a fixed redemption price and are suitable for investors looking for a rising income flow; and capital shares, which earn nothing until the trust is wound up and its gains are paid out. As such they suit investors looking for growth.

Fleming Worldwide is a new split-capital investment trust being launched in conjunction with the bid for Fleming International High Income, also a split-capital trust and soon to mature. The new trust has an interesting portfolio of investments, including high yielding equities and emerging-market debt instruments. Investors should, however, be aware of the possibility of the new issue trading at a discount in the after-market owing to a general weakness elsewhere in the split sector.

M&G is also launching a new split capital trust, again connected with a bid for one of its existing split trusts, M&G Dual Trust, which has around one year to run. The new M&G Equity Trust has an unusually long life of 15 years. A unique but very welcome aspect of the new vehicle is the absence of up-front costs, as M&G has covered launch costs itself. However, this is offset by a higher than average annual management charge. The short-term outlook for the new trust is slightly disadvantaged by the fact that most other split trusts trade at package discounts, including those run by M&G.

Perpetual's Income and Growth Trust has been launched to coincide with the PEP season. This

trust can be expected to enjoy strong support both in the offer for subscription and in the after-market, due to Perpetual's track record in this area (UK income growth shares) and their strong retail presence. We would highly recommend this trust to investors.

Following on from its highly successful smaller company unit trusts, Hill Samuel is launching a UK Emerging Companies Investment Trust. This is in the form of a placing and open offer, and should prove an effective means of investing in UK smaller companies. Availability of shares may be limited, however, as the issue is being capped at £35m.

Finally, Templeton is launching a Central and Eastern European Fund, which will invest in the emerging markets of Europe. The issue will be in the form of a placing to institutions only.

In addition to the many new issues in the market there are also a number of 'C' share issues to raise additional capital, many of which look interesting. Scottish Asian Investment Company invests in the Far East, excluding Japan. Run by Murray Johnstone, the trust has enjoyed consistently excellent performance. The premium to net asset value that the shares had been trading on has now disappeared, which does not make the 'C' shares such an attractive proposition, as no warrants are being issued to subscribers to the 'C' shares. In fact the 'C' share holders will suffer, along with existing shareholders, from any future dilution from the existing warrants as they are converted into shares.

Pacific Horizon also invests in the Far East region, exclusive of



Japan. Performance has been good in the recent past and the ordinary shares are currently trading at a small premium to net asset value. The low costs of the issue and the inclusion of warrants make the 'C' shares an attractive means of entry into the trust.

Herald Investment Trust is a UK smaller companies specialist. It has enjoyed good performance and the 'C' shares may prove an attractive alternative to the existing shares, which currently trade at a premium.

Another small company trust, Saracen Value, is proceeding with a placing with recall for existing shareholders. The trust's managers have a strong following, which has been earned by consistently good performance. Investors should note that this issue is not available to private individuals via an open offer.

For those looking for a more spirited investment, International Biotechnology Trust is having a placing and offer of 'C' shares, with warrants available on conversion. This trust invests in biotechnology shares, mostly in the USA. Cur-

rently it is trading around par, but it has traded as wide as a 25 per cent discount to net asset value. It is vital to appreciate that this is a specialised area for investment, which could produce volatile results.

A reconstruction in the trust sector is worthy of mention. LGT Asset Management is changing the investment policy of USDC Investment Trust, which will soon be renamed as GT Income and Growth Trust. Having previously been deployed on an international basis, it is now invested in UK equities. Shareholders will have the option of accepting shares in the new trust and/or units in GT Global Bond Fund, which may be redeemed for cash.

The change of policy has already been well received by the market, producing a re-rating in the share price. Nevertheless, the trust is still attractive on a medium-term basis, and the cash exit via the bond fund represents a significant uplift in value.

Bill Fowler is Investment Manager at GVG Asset Management.

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money

The cost of peace at Lloyd's — but the news may not bring peace of mind for investors facing ruin

Names will learn today how much they are being asked to contribute to the insurance market's £9bn losses. John Eisenhammer, Financial Editor, reports.



Disaster: Being a Lloyd's name was once seen as easy money — but recent years have brought a sinister new meaning to the phrase unlimited liability

Lloyd's names, the investors who put up the cash for the London insurance market, will find on their doormats today the first estimate of the final cost of buying peace at Lloyd's, although it may not buy them peace of mind. Many risk losing their homes and large amounts of money.

There were 34,000 names underwriting at Lloyd's in 1988, but today the number of active names is just over 12,000 — an unparalleled statement of flight and dispossession. Since 1988, Lloyd's of London has racked up losses over £9bn — a devastating turnaround in the fortunes of many names, by definition people of above-average means, who pledged every bit of their wealth to cover eventual liabilities. Traditionally Lloyd's had been regarded as a safe investment — securities lodged with Lloyd's earned interest, the insurance business made a profit and the cheques rolled in reg-

ularly each year. Unlimited liability was merely a theoretical risk.

Instead Lloyd's provided a stark lesson in the potential risk of financial market involvement. A combination of natural disasters and poor management led to many syndicates of insurers making massive losses. Litigation followed, and angry names refused to pay for what they thought was at best irresponsible behaviour by professional managers, who actually decided what risks to underwrite and what premiums to charge.

To avoid the real risk of Lloyd's itself going bust, the insurance society has devised an unprecedented rescue plan. It is handing off all its pre-1993 policies — notably the ruinous asbestos and pollution liabilities in the US — into a separate re-insurance company called Equitas.

Names are being asked to pay a final, individual premium into Equitas, to cover all the potential liabilities from their old policies. It means that for a price, they can do what has not been possible before — sign a cheque and walk away.

For many names, this means finding more money. To help the settlement, Lloyd's is offering at least £2.8bn in credits and debt forgiveness to names, reducing Equitas bills and buying off litigants. Many thousands of people are facing one of the most difficult financial decisions of their lives. To help, the Independent answers the key questions.

Who is affected? Every one of the 34,000 names. Even if you stopped underwriting some time ago, names remain liable to the end of their days for claims on policies written during the years they were active in the market.

Which is the key figure? The figure on page one, Summary Data of the Indicative Finality Statement. This shows an estimate of what, if anything, you will have to pay Equitas to reinsure all your old policy liabilities and draw a line under your affairs at Lloyd's. For some names, their investments already pledged to Lloyd's will be more than enough to cover the cost of Equitas, and they get some money back. The less fortunate will still need to find more cash.

What do I do? Don't panic even if the bill looks more than you can

afford. Special extra funds are there for the hardest hit. Moreover, these are estimated bills, and final premiums are likely to be lower for most people, because Lloyd's is privately confident it will raise more money to offset names' payments between now and when final statements are dispatched in May.

What do I do next?

Consult your financial adviser and banker. These are highly important decisions with considerable tax implications for some, and time is short. Planning is essential, and Lloyd's requires early notice if you want to take advantage of special schemes and assistance. The deadline for payment of the finality bills is late July.

What if I think it will be hard or impossible to pay my bill?

Inform Lloyd's promptly on the appropriate form. Anyone with an estimated finality bill in excess of their funds at Lloyd's should consider applying for additional credits from the settlement fund. These will be allocated on the basis of need. To assess this, names must submit to rigorous means testing by Lloyd's financial recovery department, declare they have not dissipated assets, and have everything signed off by an accountant.

What are the special schemes?

Lloyd's is planning a special mortgage or loan facility, to help hard-hit names get around the difficulties of age, the complexity of their affairs and the need to raise up to 100 per cent loans against their homes. This could also help names whose funds at Lloyd's are secured by their homes. Repayment could be over 25 years, with no new insurance required. The project depends on enough Names taking it up to make it worthwhile for the lenders. There will also be a structured payment facility, spreading the cost of finality over five years.

Do I have a say in all this? Yes. The entire Lloyd's settlement plan depends on the outcome of a vote by all names in July, after they have received the final Equitas bill. It will be a choice between finality, at a price, and uncertainty, which could prove more or less expensive in the years to come, as Lloyd's as we know it is wound up, and the lawyers and debt collectors take over.

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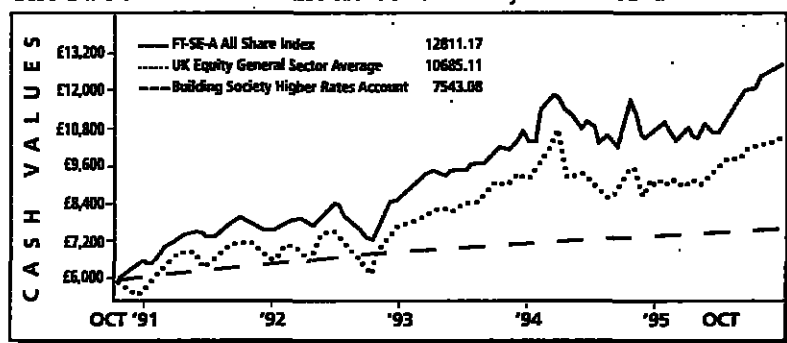
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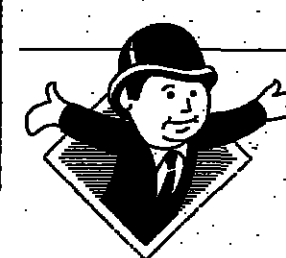
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Barclays Bank is keeping open until March 16 applications from savings account holders to defer interest due in March until after the start of the new tax year, when the tax rate will drop from 25 per cent to 20 per cent for basic rate taxpayers.

The stockbroker Foster & Braithwaite has launched a pension fund investing mainly in zero coupon shares offering a tax-free yield of 7.9 per cent to redemption. It can be used to provide an income by

selling a proportion of the holdings each year.

The Bristol-based Insurance Service is offering discounts of 10 per cent on comprehensive motor policy premiums to drivers of cars over five years old rising to over 20 per cent on cars 10 years old. Managing director Syd Pennington says: "In our experience people who have older cars are less likely to make claims."

Most motor insurance companies have singled out mature and retired motorists as the targets for lower premiums, says the motor insurance specialist Bill House Hammond. Young drivers have missed out because they are all tarred with the irresponsible boy racer brush. HHH has now introduced a Lifestyle rating which takes into account the occupation, professional qualifications, marital status and driving record of individual young drivers, which can cut their motor insurance costs by 50 per cent or more, it claims.

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How to get Bianca and Tiffany out of your property

Ian Hunter on the rights of tenants and landlords in 'EastEnders'

As addicts of BBC's *EastEnders* series will know, Bianca is not having an easy time of it. She believes that her boyfriend Ricky is attempting a reconciliation with his wife Sam. Having thrown Ricky out of their shared flat, incinerating his belongings in the process, she probably believed the worst was over.

The problem is that the flat that she and Ricky were renting is owned by Sam's brother Phil, who - having been persistently pestered by Sam - has put Bianca and her squating friend Tiffany, out on the pavement.

Tenants' rights vary depending on the type of agreement they have reached with their landlords. Enforcing those rights against an aggressive Phil Mitchell is another issue.

Most residential tenants' rights are now governed by the Housing Act 1988. This Act was ushered in to encourage more private landlords into the rental market. The easiest route by which Phil could legally have ensured a swift repossession of his flat was by entering into an assured shorthold tenancy.

This tenancy provides the landlord with the right to terminate the lease on two months' notice at any time after the expiry of the first four months of the lease. As Ricky and Bianca had been in the flat for more than four months, Phil could have asked them to quit on two months' notice.

However, certain procedures have to be followed to ensure that the lessee is given assured shorthold status. This includes serving on the tenants - before the start of the lease - a notice in the prescribed form, which sets out the limited nature of the tenants' rights.

If the correct procedures are not followed, or the landlord and tenant merely reach a verbal understanding, the tenant gains enhanced protection against eviction.

The arrangement is then known as an assured tenancy. The effect of that is that a landlord can only regain possession of the property at the end of the lease if he has successfully proved to the court that it should exercise its discretion in his favour. This compares unfavourably with the assured shorthold tenancy, where the landlord is entitled to possession as of right.

If Bianca and Ricky had been granted an assured tenancy, Phil could have had quite a struggle on his hands. Bianca is unemployed and therefore eligible for legal aid - so with a determined solicitor she could have denied Phil legal access to the property for some time.

In order for the tenants to retain protection against eviction on the expiry of the lease, in the absence of a valid court order, they must continue to live in the property. The tenants should also continue to abide by the terms of the lease, such as paying the rent regularly and carrying out repairs for which they are responsible.

The failure to do so will strengthen the landlord's right to repossession, although it is unlikely a court will order an eviction if the rent is only slightly in arrears.

Even if the landlord is not granted repossession, he can still send the bailiffs to the premises to recover any rent arrears. This can take place on any day except Sunday - but only during the hours of daylight.

The landlord can seize anything of value belonging to the tenant in order to settle the rent arrears. There is one important qualification: he cannot seize possessions such as bedding or clothes, nor can he seize an innocent third party's property. Force may not be used by the landlord to gain entry.

Likewise force should not be used to evict squatters. According to Joy Bailey, a solicitor with Exeter law firm Anstey

Sargent and Probert, "The law governing squatters does have teeth, but if the correct procedures are not followed it is likely to bite back."

If the squatters do not have permission to be there, the procedure should be swift. But Phil may have a problem in proving Tiff and Bianca did not have a right to be there if he was acquiescing in the arrangement. If he has accepted rent the two would have strong grounds for saying they are assured tenants.

A court hearing involving squatters will usually be held within a few days. If the court is satisfied the

entry was unlawful it will issue an immediate warrant for possession to the court bailiffs. The bailiffs will enforce the judgment as soon as possible.

Landlords should in all cases avoid taking the law into their own hands, whether the occupants are unwanted tenants or squatters. The landlord could end up paying damages to the occupants and may be denied possession by a court order while matters are resolved. If anyone is injured, the landlord could even end up with a criminal record - although that is unlikely to frighten the Mitchell brothers.



Getting rid of boyfriend Ricky was the easy part for EastEnders' Bianca. Now she has to deal with the landlord

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That crisp £20 note is a fake. How can anyone tell?

Hi-tech criminals can produce forgeries that will fool bank cashiers — and even some anti-counterfeit machines, writes George Campbell



Tracey Cullen was accused of passing fake notes. But the building society was wrong — the notes were proved quite genuine

Although there were 2,500 prosecutions for passing forged notes last year and some £25m was seized, one banknote in a hundred in circulation is a forgery, and numbers are on the increase.

Although many shops and filling stations use a variety of devices, including marker pens and ultra-violet light screens, to detect the cruder fakes, the best forgeries, including £10 and £20 as well as £50 notes, are now almost impossible to detect by eye, thanks to advances in sophisticated computer technology and colour printing. It is estimated that some £100m worth of fake notes are now washing around in the system.

The Bank of England plays down the gravity of the situation. "It's not serious," said a spokesman. "Less than 1 per cent of the £18bn of genuine money in circulation is fake."

But critics disagree. John Hall, head of security at the 1,700-strong Co-Operative Wholesale Society chain, reckons it is getting worse: "Over the last year, counterfeit money through our stores has jumped 20 per cent," he said. "The quality of the forgeries has improved enormously and the counterfeiters have switched from photo-copying to computer-generated graphics, which give a cleaner image and are more difficult to detect."

A genuine note should feel crisp, have a metallic

strip, a watermark and sharp clear printing. Forgers at the sharp end of technology can now reproduce all these qualities.

The consumer, and not the banks or building societies, takes the hit when a forged note is discovered. Under the Forgery and Counterfeiting Act (1981), anyone passed a fake banknote must hand it to the police with no compensation. Passing on fake notes is a criminal offence.

Banks and building societies, however, are not legally obliged to reimburse you even if they issue you with forged notes through their cash machines. Also, counterfeit notes are now so sophisticated that even experienced cashiers at the counter — not to mention their security equipment — cannot always tell the difference between a real note and a fake.

The Building Society Ombudsman is about to give a decision on a landmark case involving Bradford & Bingley and a Yorkshire housewife. Tracey Cullen took legal action after the society's Selby branch wrongly accused her of including 19 forged notes in a £4,800 cash deposit.

Tracey explained: "It was a nightmare. I was shamed and humiliated by a member of the Bradford & Bingley staff in front of other customers. The woman cashier questioned 19 notes. I was detained in the branch with my eight-month old daughter for 50

minutes. The notes were taken into the manager's office and the police were called."

Mrs Cullen was then frog-marched out of the branch in front of other customers and taken to the police station. After her arrest, police called in experts from Yorkshire Bank to examine the suspected forgeries.

"The police attitude changed completely when the bank said the notes were genuine. I was released on bail pending the outcome of forensic tests by the Bank of England," she explained.

"Next morning, the police informed me the tests had proved conclusively the notes were genuine and the society had dropped the charges."

Counterfeit notes are also plaguing small businesses, according to Stephen Alambritis of the Federation of Small Businesses. "We have heard strong rumours that the banks are instructing their staff to feed fake money back into circulation. Quite often, hard-worked bank staff will sometimes hand the forged note back to the customer to avoid embarrassment."

While acknowledging the problem, the Bank of England argues vehemently against compensating those who lose out to the counterfeiters. The Bank is convinced counterfeiters would turn to making cash out of the compensation fund. "It would be like asking us to

underwrite the crime," says a spokesman.

"Big high street concerns have invested heavily in anti-counterfeiting security," says a spokeswoman for the British Retail Consortium. "Staff are trained to spot dud notes, and the bigger stores will also get regular visits from the police warning them of the latest scams."

A British company has developed a new micro-processor system able to detect forged notes. In trials, it picked out 4,000 fakes provided by the Bank of England and the police, and the makers say it will detect counterfeits which defeat systems that use ultra-violet light or marker pens. Only 10 per cent of the test notes were caught by ultra-violet systems.

John Wilkinson of MEI Electronics in Wokingham, Berkshire, which has developed the new Cashguard, said: "Some of those systems can be fooled by coating a fake note with ordinary suntan oil products."

Cashguard costs £250 and can fit on to a check-out desk or till. A note is inserted in a slot and light with a wide range of wavelengths is shone on to it. Sensors measure how much light is reflected back, and at what wavelengths.

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Midland Bank	0800 180180	15.40
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	16.20
Secured (second charge)		
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	8.60
Royal B of Scotland	Via branch	9.30
First Direct	0800 242424	9.80

Telephone	Account	Authorised % pm	Unauthorised % pm
Woolwich BS	0800 400900	Current	0.76
Alliance & Leicester BS	0500 958585	Alliance	0.76
Abbey National	0500 200500	Current	0.79

Telephone	Card	Min income	Rate pm %	APR %	Annual fee
Standard					
Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	—	0.92G	11.50
Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 829024	MasterCard/Visa	—	1.00	14.00
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 161616	MasterCard	—	1.14	16.50
Gold cards					
Co-operative Bank	0345 212212	Visa	£20,000	0.5208M	10.80
Royal B of Scotland	01702 362890	Visa	£20,000	1.05N	14.50N
North West Bank	0800 200400	Visa	£20,000	1.14	15.90

Telephone	Payment by direct debit % pm	APR	Payment by other methods % pm	APR
John Lewis	Via store	—	1.39	18.00
Marks and Spencer	01244 681681	1.87A	1.97A	26.30
Sears	Via store	1.94	25.90	29.8

APR: Annualised percentage rate.
A: 1.53% (18.9% APR) for o/s bal over £1K.
E: Available to comprehensive motor insurance policyholders aged over 25 years.
H: Annual fee waived after first year if 50%+ charged to card during previous year.
All rates subject to change without notice.

IVT: Loan to value.
D: No interest free period.
N: No interest free period.
M: Annual fee waived after first year if 50%+ charged to card during previous year.
MONEYFACTS: 01682 500677

ASU: Accident, sickness and unemployment.
H: Special rate until 30 June 1996.
G: Annual rate 5% above R Fleming base rate.
M: Equivalent to base rate.
8 March 1996

Best savings rates

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Instant Access					
Portman BS	01202 292444	Instant Access	Instant	£1,000	4.20
Skipton BS	01756 700511	High Street	Instant	£2,500	5.10
Co-operative Bank	0345 252000	Packfinder	Instant	£5,000	5.37
Skipton BS	01756 700511	High Street	Instant	£20,000	6.00
Instant Access					
Ruckinghamshire BS	01494 873064	Children Gold	Postal	£1,000	5.30
Direct Line	0181 667 1121	Instant Savings	Telephone	£10,000	5.60
Direct Line	0181 667 1121	Instant Savings	Telephone	£25,000	5.00
Scottish Widows Bank	0345 828829	Instant Access	Postal	£50,000	6.15

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Instant Access					
Manchester BS	0161 834 9465	45 Day	45 day	£25,000	5.55
Bradford & Bingley BS	0345 248248	Direct 50	50 day P	£15,000	6.86
Bradford & Bingley BS	0345 248248	Direct 50	50 day P	£15,000	7.20
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	120 Account	120 day	£5,000	6.50
Instant Access					
Co-operative Bank	0345 252000	Packfinder	Instant	£5,000	5.37
Leopold Joseph & Sons	0171 388 2323	40 Day Notice	40 day	£10,000	6.52
Bradford & Bingley BS	0345 248248	Direct 50	50 day P	£15,000	6.80
Bradford & Bingley BS	0345 248248	Direct 50	50 day P	£15,000	7.00

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Instant Access					
West Bromwich BS	0121 680 8024	Guaranteed Growth	31/1/97	£5,000	6.30
Woolwich BS	0800 222200	Fixed Rate Bond	2 yr bond	£1,000	6.40F
Strand & Swenden BS	0345 252425	Fixed Rate Bond	24/5/99	£2,000	7.05F
First National BS	01232 314050	Winfield Fund	4 yr bond	£1,000	7.00F

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Instant Access					
Robert Fleming/S&P	0800 829024	Higher Rate Deposit	Instant	£1,000	5.25
Wainwright Benson	01202 502404	HCA	Instant	£2,500	5.50
Alliance & Leicester BS	0118 271 7272	Alliance	Instant	£5,000	5.00
Chelsea BS	0800 272505	Classic Postal	Instant	£25,000	5.25

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Instant Access					
Premium Life	0800 414111	1 year	£20,000	4.80FN	Year
Financial Assurance	0181 380 3388	2 year	£5,000	5.25FN	Year
Financial Assurance	0181 380 3388	3 year	£5,000	5.50FN	Year
Financial Assurance	0181 380 3388	4 year	£5,000	5.75FN	Year
Abbey Life	01202 292373	5 year	£50,000	6.30FN	Year

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Instant Access					
North Rock, Guern	01481 714600	Offshore Instant	Instant	£25,000	6.70
North Rock, Guern	01481 714600	Offshore Instant	Instant	£50,000	6.90
Alliance & Leics (IOM)	01624 663566	Investment Bond	1 yr bond	£25,000	6.95
Strand & Swenden, Guern	01481 700680	Fixed Account	31.1.99	£5,000	7.25F

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Instant Access					
Investment Account		1 month	£20	5.00	Year
			£500	5.50	Year
			£25,000	5.75	Year
Income Bond		3 month	£2,000	6.25	Month
			£25,000	6.50	Month

Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Instant Access					
Capital Bond	Series 1	5 year	£100	6.65 F	Maturity
First Option Bond		12 month	£1,000	6.25 F	Year
			£20,000	6.50 F	Year
Pensioners' Guaranteed Income Bond	Series 3	5 year	£500	7.00 F	Month
NS Certificates (tax-free)					
43rd Issue		5 year	£100	5.35 F	Maturity
9th Index linked		5 year	£100	2.50 + RPI	Maturity
Children's Bond	Issue H	5 year	£25	6.75 F	Maturity

P: post only
N: net rate
All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice.

MONEYFACTS 01682 500677.

7 March 1996

FEAR OF FINANCE
Clifford German

Poor old Eddie must be wondering if he was wise to sign up for the Ken and Eddie show. Eddie was meant to be the brains of the team when the double act was set up two years ago to assure the world that controlling inflation would take precedence over political knockabout in future. After fluffing his lines last year, Eddie is now looking more and more like the stooge, while Ken is increasingly able to write the scripts to suit his political objectives.

He has been able to ignore new evidence that consumer spending is already picking up strongly, because this can be explained by the effects of income tax cuts announced last November to take effect next month – and by the sudden release of cash locked up in Tessa accounts for the past five years. The vast bulk has been reinvested but even 5 per cent of the money released would add £1 billion to consumer spending.

The first tentative signs that the housing market is picking up will not have caused Ken any worries either. His political instincts will tell him that without a bit of feel-good between now and the election the Tories are dead and buried.

But there is a genuine economic case for lower interest rates as well. Research published this week by Panmure Gordon shows that over the last 20 years an inverted graph of interest rates matches the performance of the economy – as measured by the index of longer leading indicators – remarkably well, with the exception of election year in 1992, and again in 1996 when the economic outlook has plunged in spite of falling interest rates. The outlook is now as bad as it

was when base rates were at 15 per cent during the '80s. The truth is that inflation is still weak, and real interest rates, after deducting the rate of inflation, are actually rather high.

Even today real base rates are over 3 per cent and real borrowing costs are well above base rate. Personal loans and especially credit card rates are particularly expensive. Better still the rest of the world is on a similar course, and the UK is not inviting an attack on sterling by going against worldwide trends.

Yesterday's cut was not dramatic, but tiny cuts suit the Chancellor well and the latest is unlikely to be the last. There could well be another two or three before the election. The Halifax has led the way for further cuts in mortgage rates, intensifying the war between the public companies and the mutuals still further. But banks and building societies still have fixed costs to cover and savings rates are also set to fall.

We can expect the cost of short-term discounted mortgages to dwindle towards vanishing point, but savers must expect the returns on easy access accounts for small sums to drop to derisory levels.

Investors who chose fixed rate Tessa rather than variable rates when they started renewing their accounts in January will certainly be giving themselves a pat on the back, while borrowers who took out fixed rate mortgages over the last two years must be kicking themselves, and their financial advisers as well.

The Portman's decision to knock a full point off its fixed rate loans is an attempt to recapture the initiative which others will surely follow.

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- Access to your investment at all times
- No initial charge and no exit charge
- An alternative to higher rate savings accounts and Tessa.

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money

'Don't join company pension schemes without advice'

BAD DEALS: In her desire to move on and up in the world of advertising, Marcella Speller made all the right moves. Except when planning her pension

Marcella Speller is marketing director of Internet Holiday Rentals, the first company in the UK to specialise in using the Information Superhighway to promote private homes available for self-catering holidays around the world. After 10 years in advertising Speller took an MBA and has since held senior and board level marketing appointments with blue-chip companies. She says that her worst mistake has been the cumulative neglect of her pension plans. "After graduating at the University of East Anglia in 1971 my first job was with British Rail. During your twenties, of course, you don't even think about pensions, and when I left to join an advertising agency in 1974 it was still the last thing on my mind. "In my twenties and thirties, while working my way up the career ladder, I had a series of jobs, most of which I left within two years

as I was headhunted for the next one. There was no such thing as a personal pension in those days. The whole pensions industry was designed for people who started work at 16 and weren't expected to leave the company until they were 65. "When my generation came along, and moving jobs became a way of life, we discovered that you couldn't take your pension with you. Even worse, if you left the company within two years, you didn't get the benefit of employer's contributions. You were simply refunded for payments you had made during the period of your employment. "Over the years Ms Speller worked her way up in a variety of different companies, then in 1981 took a year off to do an MBA, before joining Heineken as senior manager of European projects, based in Amsterdam and Ireland. "In 1984 I returned to Britain and set up my own business offering consultancy, venture capital and

marketing for hi-tech companies. By then I was 34. I took out a self-employed pension, but I had only paid £1800 into it when I was offered a job as senior marketing manager with Avis. The regulations in those days meant I couldn't have continued with my personal pension even if I had wanted to because I wasn't self-employed any more. "Instead, my contributions were frozen until I reached 60. I don't know whether I can free them under the new legislation because it's all so complicated. There are so many reams of paper, it's as if they don't want you to understand it."

Between 1985 and 1989 Ms Speller worked for three different companies in senior marketing roles, but each time she was made redundant because of restructuring. "I wasn't in any of the jobs for as long as two years, so each time they just handed my pension contributions back, mostly without interest and always without employer's contributions. Even so, it wasn't until I was approaching 40 that I thought: 'Hang on a minute, I'm half-way through my career and what pension have I got to show for it?' "My next job was as sales and marketing director for a company in the travel industry, and once again I was forced to contribute to its pension scheme. This time I resigned due to an intolerable boss. A week later, while I was still working out the notice on my 12-month contract, he fired me for gross misconduct so that he wouldn't have to pay me. "I took legal action, won my case and got my pension handed back, but still with no employer's contribution, no interest, no nothing. By now I was 42 and I felt really cheated. Pension contributions are meant to be a tax-efficient investment, yet my employers had been taking that money, using it and getting the interest on it themselves. "I've been working now from 1971 to 1996, and - allowing for a year off to study - that's 24 years during which I should have built up a sizeable pension. After all, I was earning up to £70,000 a year. "Instead, I lost a lot of money. The rate of inflation between 1976 and 1981 alone was fluctuating between 12 and 18 per cent, so even a return of 5 per cent would have been dishonest. It was daylight robbery and I was furious.



"The trouble is, when you're starting a new job you've got so many things to think about, like the salary, and whether you'll get on with your new boss. It's very difficult to ask what will happen to your contributions if you leave within two years because it wouldn't go down very well. "Fortunately, one of the first reforms of the Thatcher era was the introduction of portable pensions. It was in recognition of the fact that times have changed: people do get made redundant, companies do get downsized, and if you haven't been there for two years you are in a vulnerable position. It was 1993 before I finally took out a private pension scheme, and now that I have, no company in the future will be able to force me to contribute to theirs. "I've never been very good at investing money. I like earning it and spending it on things like houses, but I don't like the uncertainty of putting it where I can't see it. And I don't think I'm alone: even now that so many women are financially independent, we still don't give enough thought to our future security. "Other people, she says, should learn from her mistakes: "The fact is, you have to look after yourself, because nobody else is going to do it. If you are likely to move in less than two years, don't join a company pension scheme without seeing an independent financial adviser first. "Make sure you take out a pension plan that suits your personal needs, and if you're still in your twenties, don't put it off. Do it now."

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Managing your money for the longer term

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Something extra from your cash dispenser

By Dido Sandler

Does your cash dispenser give you extra money absolutely free? If it's a NatWest branch hole in the wall, it probably does. From Monday money-off vouchers will accompany cash withdrawals at a thousand sites up and down the country.

First to emerge through the slot will be discount offers of up to £50 on Seafrance cross-Channel ferries, and a promotion around the launch of the Walt Disney video *Pocahontas*. Others to follow include vouchers for large stores, manufacturers and assorted high profile brands.

This type of voucher system has been very successful in tests, with brands such as Sainsbury's, Coca Cola and Mars achieving redemption rates as high as 11 per cent. Comparable leaflet drops, by contrast, achieve only a 1-2 per cent response rate.

It's all about added value, says NatWest's marketing department - giving customers extra service from their cash till.

It's also about making

money for the bank - lots of it. They won't disclose how much - commercially sensitive information this.

Advertisers will be tempted by the opportunity to target specific areas or neighbourhoods, and in the long term, individuals who withdraw large amounts of cash. The bank says this would not invade customer privacy.

On the back of the vouchers there will be information about offers from the bank's own portfolio of financial services. Like its main rivals - Lloyds TSB, Midland and Barclays - NatWest is looking to maximise value from customers by cross-selling their products and services. The cash dispenser vouchers are just one of several ways.

Each bank would like to become a one-stop shop for all their customers' financial needs. Someone with a simple loss-making current account could be sold a whole range of products - a mortgage, pension, life insurance, home and travel insurance, PEPs and Tassas.

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ITV/Regions

[illegible]

Perplexity

Perplexity

Losswords: Our on-line dictionary has been playing up again, deleting the letters of each word, in the correct order, from the definitions. Then, to make matters worse, it closes the gaps between words. So "lost," defined as "allowed to stray" appears only as "alwed-toray," but it does at least indicate the number of letters omitted. See if you can decode these three: **riestongskrlimlw (9)**, **otitliciohercluciq (7)**, **ingronomy (5)**

A prize of the *Lancuse Desk Encyclopedia* awaits a correct answer. Entries, by 21 Mar. to: Saturday Pastimes, the *Independent*, 1 Canada Sq., London E14 5DL.

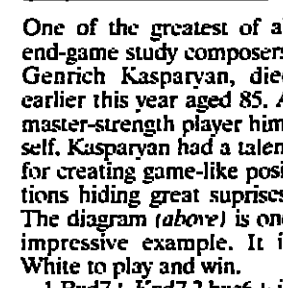
24 February competition:

Answer: Psychologist (school piety). Anthropologists (shoin piety). Historian (rain hoist). Winner: Stella Moffat.

the logic behind this apparently anti-percentage play?

Declarer reasoned that a successful trump finesse would be unnecessary, for if East held the guarded king, it was a certainty that the club finesse would be right. Remember, East had passed his partner's opening bid. The extra edge that South had given himself was that if West held the king of trumps, it was singleton.

And if nothing fell under the ace of trumps and the club finesse proved to be wrong? Then declarer could surely accuse his partner of over-exuberance.



tempting, since 2...Kxe7 loses to 3.c7. But 2...Rxc6 3.Rxc6 Kxe7! gives Black an easy draw. 1...hxc6? allows Ra6 mate, and

Bridge Alan Hiron
 Camp all dealer West

North
 ♠J 8 4
 ♥8 7 5
 ♦K 10
 ♣A Q 10 6 3

West
 ♠K
 ♥A K Q 6 4
 ♦9 5 3 2
 ♣J 7 4

East
 ♠6 5 2
 ♥J 3 2
 ♦8 7 6 4
 ♣K 9 2

South
 ♠A Q 10 9 7 3
 ♥10 9
 ♦A Q J
 ♣8 5

South applied some interest in the club suit, but was

1.Rxc6+ dxc6 2.Bxc6 lets Black defend with ...Rb8+ 3.Ka7 Bd4+. So White must begin with a bishop move to vacate e8, but which one? Wherever it goes, play continues 1...Rb8+ 2.Ka7 Bd4+ 3.b6 when 3...Rxb6!! poses problems. After 4.e8=Q Ka7, how is White to defend against the threat of 5...Rb7+ and 6...Ra7 mate? The answer has to be 5.Ra2! (to meet Rb7+ with Ka8). So White's first move must be 1.Bf7! to protect the rook in case of 5...Rh2+.

Now for the clever part.

After 1.Bf7 Rb8+ 2.Ka7 Bd4+ 3.b6 Bxb6+ 4.Ka6 Bb8!, Black threatens mate on a8. White has no time to queen his pawn. So how can he win? The answer is a delight: 5.Rxc6+! dxc6 6.Be6+ Kc7 7.e8=N mate—an underpromotion and mate out of the blue, with every piece playing a part.

this deal. He had all the necessary clues, but it would have been easy to overlook them.

West opened 1 ♠ and, after two passes, South re-opened with 2 ♣ – neither strong nor weak, but just about right in the protective position. North raised to game and all passed.

West started with three top hearts against 4 ♠ and declarer ruffed the third. It would have been all too easy to rely (unsuccessfully) on finesses in both the black suits, but South read more into the position. At trick four he laid down the ace of trumps and dropped West's king.

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 piety); Anthropologist (shoot-
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And if nothing fell under the ace of trumps and the club finesse proved to be wrong? Then declarer could successfully accuse his partner of



It's called casting against type, and it's as good a way as any of kicking lazy casting directors up the pants. Last week we had *Birds of a Feather* Pauline Quilke as a murderer serving life in the excellent *The Sculptress*. This week it's that nice Kevin Whately from *Inspector Morse* and *Peak Practice*, as a wife-beater. The occasion is Lucy Gannon's thoughtful shocker of a drama, *Trap* (Sat BBC1), and coming to think of it, it was a Lucy Gannon drama, *Tender Loving Care*, that cast David French as a nurse who was bumping off her patients. And, while we're still making connections, Gannon was also responsible for Whately's *Peak Practice*, not to mention *Soldier, Soldier* and *Bramwell*. Commissioning editors must camp out on her front lawn.

Shane Richie Experience (Sat.FTV): This, in case you missed the hoo-ha surrounding last year's pilot, is a game show for intending couples: the winning pair being married there and then on EY. Perhaps the idea could be extended to a game show for dissolving marrieds - with the winning partner getting a quickie divorce and custody of the kids. Cynical? I'm only looking at the role models for those whose marriages have been televised in the past: Anne and Mark, Charles and Diana...

stars James Wilby in the story of German aristocrat James von Moltke's brave opposition to the Nazis. It's all very worthy, but I have to admit to switching to remote here. I still remember the same territory covered by Dennis Potter's more interesting *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, the drama that gave the world at large its first glimpse of one Elizabeth Hurley.

The Natural World (Sun-BBC) looks at the wildlife that hangs out at one drought-stricken South African water-hole. Not another dwindling water-hole film, I hear you groan. Stick with it, I say. I can say. Apart from the fascinating Darwinian dynamics of the situation, there are moments of high anthropomorphic comedy. Witness the crocodiles bring their tongues rather than snack on the baby hippo who is jostling them around. Mama is watching you see.

The big match
Leeds United vs Liverpool
Sun 3.50pm BBC1

Leeds United, under the management of Howard Wilkinson, tipped by some as the man to succeed Terry Venables as England coach, are already in the final of Coca Cola Cup. Shaking further way in the FA Cup, they found it the formidable obstacle of Liverpool. Their good run is due in no small measure to the goal-scoring feat of Robbie Fowler (above, with Stan Collymore) who most surely be forcing his way into contention for England's Euro '96 squad.

BBC 1

- BBC 2**

- ITV/London**

- ## Channel 4

- ## ITV/Regions

- ANSLA**
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (53680), 1.10-Airline Flight (72249221), 2.05-asQuest (587), 1.07 (47489), 3.50-RobboCop (5060129), 11.50 Film Farewell to the King (20270355), 2.00am Pyra: Pyra (164159A), 3.00am IVF Sports Classics (46257121), 3.25am Pyra: Pyra Business (5310381), 4.00am Hawaiian Islands Tradition 1995 (6739861), 5.00-5.30am Wanted Dead or Alive (57300).
- TIME 180/PURCHASE**
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (53680), 1.10-The Hampton Classic Horse Show (709440), 1.55-The 1987 Grand National (7989715), 5.10-Five Film (1906928), Ivoris Scoreline (5906082), 11.50 Film: Whooops Apocalypse (246600), 1.30am Pyra: Pyra Business (51710), 2.00am-Pyra: Pyra (2395697), 2.25am Air War of the World (725717), 3.00am IVF Sports Classics (46257121), 3.25am Pyra: Pyra Business (5310381), 4.40-5.00am Quid Die Movie (7321126).
- CGN/ML**
As London except: 12.30pm-Heartland (53680), 1.40-The Murders: Today (4627828), 2.05-Women Brothers Canon (5010506), 3.20-RobboCop (4143265), 3.20-Airline Flight (709474), 4.15-The Midway Touch (531248), 4.30-World's Wildest Police Chase (5906093), 11.45 Pyra: Pyra (587739), 1.30am Pyra: Pyra Business (775504), 1.40am Film: In Love and War (516497), 3.20am Gods' Gift (517891Q), 4.10am Jollyday (4206565), 5.20-5.30am Pelin Eye (823556).
- RTV**
As London except: 12.30pm-The Murders: Today (4627828), 1.40am-The Murders: Today (4627828), 2.05-Thunder in Paradise (817489), 11.50 Film: Farewell to the King (20270355), 2.00am-Pyra: Pyra (2395697), 3.25am Pyra: Pyra Business (6756257), 3.50am IVF Sports Classics (4625622), 4.00am Hawaiian Islands Tradition 1995 (6739861), 5.00-5.30am Wanted Dead or Alive (57300).
- WGBH-TV**
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (53680), 1.10-Film Canon (5060129), 2.55-Airline Flight (469877), 3.50-RobboCop (5060129), 11.50 Film Farewell to the King (20270355), 2.00am Pyra: Pyra (2395697), 3.25am Pyra: Pyra Business (6756257), 3.50am IVF Sports Classics (4625622), 4.00am Hawaiian Islands Tradition 1995 (6739861), 5.00-5.30am Wanted Dead or Alive (57300).
- WGBH-TV**
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos (53680), 1.10-Film: Son of Robber (967534), 2.55 Knight Rider (469877), 3.50-Airline Flight (5060129), 11.50 Film Farewell to the King (20270355), 2.00am Pyra: Pyra (2395697), 3.25am Pyra: Pyra Business (6756257), 3.50am IVF Sports Classics (4625622), 4.00am Hawaiian Islands Tradition 1995 (6739861), 5.00-5.30am Wanted Dead or Alive (57300).
- SBC**
As CA except: 11.00am-The Persuaders (62625), 12.30pm-Road Show (725459), 2.35-Channel 4 Roadshow (444373), 6.30-Hollywood (721), 7.00 News (971568), 7.30-8.15 John W. Young (728), 8.15-Hill Country (622248), 8.45-Ten Nightly News (554848), 9.15 Eleven Men Against Eleven (4478339), 12.20am-Sovets: Flying Squad (1075907), 1.20am-Film: Rock 'n' Roll Cop (517891Q).

Radio

Radio 1

- 9:15-9:25AM
7.00am Kevin Creaming 1.00 Radio
Dave Pearce 12.30 Danny Baker
2.00 The Whitehead 3.00 John Peel
7.00 Lovegrove Garden Party with
Danny Pampling 9.00 Radio
1 Rap Show 12.00 Essential Mix
Peter Wardman 2.00 Anne
Nightingale's Chill Out Zone
4.00-7.00am Lynn Parsons
- Radio 2**
6:30-6:45AM
6.00am No Dubs 8.05 Ben
10.00 The 1975 11.00 John Peel 12.00
Hayes on Saturday 1.30 The Queen
of Rumba 2.00 Martin Kellie on
Saturday 4.00 Nick Barclay
5.00 Gannet in Concert 6.00 The
Radio 2 Hour 7.00 The Story Be-
hind... Jesus Christ Superstar 7.30
Jesus Christ Superstar: See Choice
9.20 Dave 10.00 10.00 Sheridan
Music 12.05 Charles No 4.00-
7.00am No Dubs
- Radio 3**
6:30-6:45AM
6.00-7.00am Record Row
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Owen Murray spearheads the advance of *The Classical Accordion* (3.20pm R3), with selections from Messiaen's great organ cycle *La Nativité* – wizard wheeze, eh? Also a potential wizard wheeze (left): Julian Clary as Herod in a new recording of *Jesus Christ Superstar* (7.30pm R2), with Roger Daltrey and Tony Hadley.

- the Waterfront, Profkoff, Sex
L'Heutenant Kije, Shostakovich
Incidental Music; Roger Lantz,
CD Jazz Record Requests
Theater of the Absurd, CD
reports on the Opera Comique
version of Schütz's song-
cycle *Winterreise*.
Soprano and Contralto (p)
Schumann: Papillons, Op 2
Des Abends; Aufzeichnung:
Beethoven, arr Liszt: Sonata
Op 10, No 12.
A first look from the Teatro del
dell'Opera, Rome, Mascag-
giare version opera. Cast in-
cludes Nicola Ghiusev, Gio-
vanne Bonfanti, Desirée
no (frs). Rome Opera Chorus
and Orchestra/Gianluigi Gel-
metti, Dir., 1982. DSD, 2 CDs.
Italian Encounters, Act 2, (9-
10) Kathryn Stott (Spiano),
Chopin: Ballades in G minor,
Op 23 No 1; in F, Op 38 Nr
2. 1996. DSD, 2 CDs.
25-1,00am Carribean Jazz
Project. A group led by Cubito
auto saxophonist Patrice
Morgan. Includes some re-
members of Szyro Gyra, Dr.
D. Samuels and Andy Narel.
Recorded at the Blue Note Re-
cording Studio, New York City.
- Newman Ross University

- Radio 4**
4.34, 5.05z FM, 15.30z LW
00am News Briefing.
10 Farming Today.
50 Prayer for the Day.
55 Weather.
00 Today.
58 Weather.
00 (FM) News.
00 (LW) Cricket World Cup.
coverage of the second quarter
final from Bangalore, India.
05 (FM) Sport on 4.
00 (FM) Breakaway.
1.00 (FM) News; Loose Ends.

- 11.00 (FM) News: The Week in Westminster.**
11.30 (FM) Europefile. David Weller presents a profile of Wolfgang Schäfer, one of the strongest politicians to emerge from the Baltic states.
12.00 Money Box. 12 minutes.
12.25 Weather.
1.00 News.
1.10 (FM) Any Questions? Jonathan Dimbleby's guests are Peter and NIP Labour leader, Patricia Hewitt, Deputy Chair, Commission on Social Justice, Teresa Gorman MP, and Times columnist Sir John Major.
1.15 (LW) Cricket World Cup. 1.50 Shipping Forecast.
2.00 (FM) Any Questions? 2.30 (FM) Cricket World Cup.
2.30 (FM) Saturday Playhouse: *The Sheffield Picasso.* Reflective drama by David Sheffery about the role of Picasso in Sheffield in 1950 to ascend a World Peace Conference. With Oliver Pierre as Picasso.
4.00 (FM) News. 4.30 (FM) *World in History.*
5.00 Film on 4.
5.00 Lessons from the Green Room. Short comedy needs from the reminiscences of film in LA. (3:4).
5.50 Shipping Forecast.
5.55 Weather.
6.00 6 O'Clock News.
6.25 Week Ending.
6.50 Postcard from Gotham.
7.20 Kaleidoscope Feature. Paul Allen talks to Sebastian Barry about the new Irish literary mafia poetry in plays like the award-winning *The Steward of Christendom*.
7.50 Saturday Night Theatre: A Raging Fury. Christopher Reid's play is revealed as a dreamy fantasy in which: Allen's father is the real-life Captain Hurricane. Later, with the Gulf War looming, his father is a war hero and the trauma of his childhood returns. With James Aubrey.

9.20 ML
9.50 T

- [illegible]

Satellite

SKY ONE

- 7.00am Under the Sun (717)222, 10.00
Gull-Weekend (717)1537, 11.45
The New Family (719)2022
12.00 WWF (70)335, 1.00 The Hit
Ma (5059)31, 2.00 The Adventures
of Bruce Conner Junior (701)70, 3.00
The Legend Continues (71)441
Kung Fu, the Legend Continues
(2535)7, 5.00 Mysteries Island
(75)39, 6.00 WWF (75)847, 7.00
Salsos (601)18, 8.00 Unsolved
Mysteries (71)441, 9.00 Knight
9.30 Cop's (91)504, 10.00 Dream
(8)4266, 10.30 Revelations
(8)4266, 11.00 The Movie Show
11.30 The Movie Show (71)441
(68)034, 12.30 WKRP in Cincinnati
(41)132, 1.00 Saturday Night Live
(25)300, 2.00-6.00am Hit Mix
Radio (142)749.
- SIN MOVIES**
6.00am The Lord of the Rings: The Two
Towers (1957) (61)222, 10.00 Bustime
Moon (1987) (156)44, 12.00 Waiting
Thunder (1993) (64)373, 2.00
Superman Returns (2006) (1)441
The Shogun and the Rose (1976)
(866)509, 6.00 Prelude to a Kiss
(1991)2, Romantic comedy starring
Jeff Bridges and Meg Ryan (305)77,
8.00 The Untouchables (2007)2,
9.00 The Untouchables (2007)2,
10.00 A Perfect World (1993),
Drama starring Kevin Costner and Clint
Eastwood (1993)2, 11.00 Hollywood
Dreams (1993) (55)4294,
1.50 Beyond Obsession (1993)2,
94)3565, 3.00-6.00am Great Lone-
somes (1981) (62)2929.
- MOVIE CHANNEL**
6.00am The 100 Greatest Day, 'If You
Love Me, Love My Dad' (1993) (59)9893, 8.30
7.45 Breakout (1984) (23)715, 11.
9.00 Black Island (1979) (31)575, 1.
10.00 Vals of Deception (1994)
(1994)2, 11.00 The Untouchables
(1990) (62)915, 2.00 Stand Up and
Cheer (1994) (96)6880, 3.15 Little
Miss Broadway (1993) (74)5857,
5.00 No Decision Day, 'If You Love
Me, Love My Dad' (1993)2, 6.00
Look Who's Talking Now (1993)
Comedy starring John Travolta and
Kristen Avila (81)47, 8.00 The Fug-
tive (1993), Action starring Ham-
ilton (1993)2, 9.00 The Untouchables
(1994)2, 10.00 Color of Night
(1994) Thriller starring Bruce Willis
and Jennifer Jason (508)19625, 12.15
Starts (1993) (67)1890, 2.00 If
You Love Me, Love My Dad (1993)
(39)4251, 3.55-6.00am Love the
TV Movies (173)17126
- SIN MOVIES**
4.00pm The Seven Year Itch (1955)
7.37, 6.00 The Mouse That Roared

- (1969). Peter Sellers stars as Prime Minister in the lively *Duchy of Grand Fenwick*, a self-governing state which declares war on the United States, in *The Prime Minister's Dilemma*. With a twist to the economic boom (458474), 8.00
Two of a Kind (1983). Musical comedy starring John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John (*717064*). 10.00 Saturday Movie (1977). Classic 4-10 movie-starring John Travolta and Karen Lynn Gorney (*5519286*). 12.00
Saturday Night Live (1983) 12.00
Star Trek: The Motion Picture (1979) 12.00
The Exorcist II (1990) (*855516*)
- UK GOLD**
- 7.00am Give Us a Clue (*26525259*).
7.30 Going for Gold? (*76186044*).
7.55 The Sullivan Orchestras (*30206808*). 10.00 Bergara (*7707568*). 11.00 Classic Sport (*214444*). 11.30 Newsnight (*15809371*). 2.15 Eastenders (*18421248*). 5.00 TFI Friday Os Don't Pan (*2265444*). 5.35 Fall and Rise of the Romanovs (*18421248*). 6.00 Connaught Dad (*67742935*). 6.45 It's Airt! Half Hot, Mum (*3688335*). 7.30 The Upchuck Connection (*7707568*). 8.00 The Big Bang Theory (*1659774*). 8.30 Collette (*98564749*). 9.35 Tenko (*67222880*). 10.00 Film: Battle of the River Plate (*90024348*). 12.00 The Phil Spector Story (*68142402*). 1.55 7.00am Shopping (*64710861*).
- SVT SPORTS**
- 6.00am Cricket World Cup: Quarter Final 4 (*14968118*). 12.00 Cricket World Cup: Quarter Final 2 - Lives (*75342652*). 5.00 Gulate World Sports (*75342652*). 5.30 Football: England v Brazil (*75342652*). 6.00 FA Cup Sixth Round Special (*743350*). 8.00 Big Time Boxing: Steve Collins v Neville Brown (*75342652*). 10.30 Hold Back the Bag (*149591*). 11.30 World Sports (*75342652*). 12.00 Football: Scotland v Czech Republic (*75342652*). 1.30-3.00am Big Time Boxing (*368555*).
- SVT SPORTS 2**
- 7.00am Soccer AM (*5518179*).
11.00 WWF (*1242335*). 12.00 Soccer Saturday (*19791828*). 5.30 Football: England v Brazil (*75342652*). 6.00 Cricket World Cup (*2676444*). 6.30 Football: Portugal v USA; Honda Olympic - Live (*7372083*). 11.00 Opposite Lock (*7918571*). 12.30-1.00am Futbol Mundial (*55170245*).
- LIVE TV**
- 7.00am Live US 10.00. The Fashion Show 11.00 Video Box 1.00 Live The Fashion Show 2.00 Live The Fashion Show 3.00 Live The Fashion Show 4.00 Live The Fashion Show 5.00 Live The Fashion Show 6.00 Live The Fashion Show 7.00 Live The Fashion Show 8.00 Live The Fashion Show 9.00 Video Box 10.00 Stand-Up Live 11.00 The Sex Show 12.00 Stand-Up Live 12.30 The Sex Show 1.00am Stand-Up Live 1.30am Stand-Up Live 2.00am Stand-Up Live 2.30am Stand-Up Live 3.00am Stand-Up Live 3.30am Stand-Up Live 4.00am Stand-Up Live 4.30am Stand-Up Live 5.00am Stand-Up Live 5.30am Stand-Up Live 6.00am Stand-Up Live 6.30am Stand-Up Live 7.00am Stand-Up Live 7.30am Stand-Up Live 8.00am Stand-Up Live 8.30am Stand-Up Live 9.00am Stand-Up Live 9.30am Stand-Up Live 10.00am Stand-Up Live 10.30am Stand-Up Live 11.00am Stand-Up Live 11.30am Stand-Up Live 12.00am Stand-Up Live 12.30am Stand-Up Live 1.00am Stand-Up Live 1.30am Stand-Up Live 1.50am Stand-Up Live 2.00am Stand-Up Live 2.30am Stand-Up Live 3.00am Stand-Up Live 3.30am Stand-Up Live 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